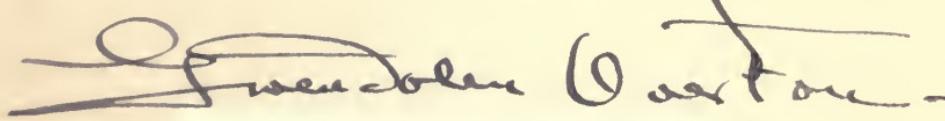
THE HERITAGE OF UNREST

GWENDOLEN OVERTON

Most affectionately
and sincerely
Gwendolen Overton

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BY

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It is one thing to be sacrificed to a cause, even if it is only by filling up the ditch that others may cross to victory; it is quite another to be sacrificed in a cause, to die unavailingly without profit or glory of any kind, to be even an obstacle thrown across the way. And that was the end which looked Cabot in the face. He stood and considered his horse where it lay in the white dust, with its bloodshot eyes turned up to a sky that burned like a great blue flame. Its tongue, all black and swollen, hung out upon the sand, its flanks were sunken, and its forelegs limp.

Cabot was not an unmerciful man, but if he had had his sabre just then, he would have dug and turned it in the useless carcass. He was beside himself with fear; fear of the death which had come to the cow and the calf whose chalk-white skeletons were at his feet, of the flat desert and the low bare hills, miles upon miles away, rising a little above the level, tawny and dry, giving no hope of shelter or streams or shade. He had foreseen it all when the horse had stumbled in a snake hole, had limped and struggled a few yards farther, and then, as he slipped to the ground, had stood quite still, swaying from side to side, with its legs wide apart, until it fell. He gritted his teeth so that the veins

stood out on his temples, and, going closer, jerked at the bridle and kicked at its belly with the toe of his heavy boot, until the glassy eye lighted with keener pain.

The column halted, and the lieutenant in command rode back. He, too, looked down at the horse, pulling at his mustache with one gauntleted hand. He had played with Cabot when they had been children together, in that green land of peace and plenty which they called the East. They had been schoolmates, and they had the same class sympathies even now, though the barrier of rank was between them, and the dismounted man was a private in Landor's own troop. Landor liked the private for the sake of the old times and for the memory of a youth which had held a better promise for both than manhood had fulfilled.

"Done up, — is it?" he said thoughtfully. His voice was hard because he realized the full ugliness of it. He had seen the thing happen once before.

Cabot did not answer. The gasping horse on the sand, moving its neck in a weak attempt to get up, was answer enough. He stood with his hands hanging helplessly, looking at it in wrath and desperation.

Landor took stock of the others. There had been five led horses twenty-four hours before, when they had started on a hot trail after the chief Cochise. But they had taken the places of five others that had dropped in their tracks to feed the vultures that followed always, flying above in the quivering blue. They were a sorry lot, the two score that remained.

In the spring of '61, when the handful of frontier troops was pressed with enemies red and brown and white, the cavalry was not well mounted.

Landor saw that his own horse was the best; and it bid very fair to play out soon enough. But until it should do so, his course was plain. He gathered his reins in his hands. "You can mount behind me, Cabot," he said. The man shook his head. It was bad enough that he had come down himself without bringing others down too. He tried to say so, but time was too good a thing to be wasted in argument, where an order would serve. There was a water hole to be reached somewhere to the southwest, over beyond the soft, dun hills, and it had to be reached soon. Minutes spelled death under that white hot sun. Landor changed from the friend to the officer, and Cabot threw himself across the narrow haunches that gave weakly under his weight.

It went well enough for a time, and the hills seemed coming a little nearer, to be rougher on the surface. Then the double-loaded horse fagged. Cabot felt that it did, and grasped hard on the burning cantle as he made his resolve. When Landor used his spurs for the first time, he loosed his hold and dropped to the ground.

Landor drew rein and turned upon him with oaths and a purpled face. "What the devil are you trying to do now?" he said.

Cabot told him that he was preparing to remain where he was. His voice was firm and his lips were

set under the sun-bleached yellow of his beard, but his face was gray, for all the tan. He lapsed into the speech of other days. "No use, Jack," he said; "it's worse than court-martial — what I've got to face here. Just leave me some water and rations, and you go on."

Landor tried another way then, and leaned from his saddle in his earnestness. He put it in the light of a favor to himself. But Cabot's refusal was unanswerable. It was better one than two, he said, and no horse in the command could carry double.

"I will try to reach the water hole. Leave a man there for me with a horse. If I don't — " he forced a laugh as he looked up at the buzzard which was dropping closer down above him.

"You could take turns riding behind the men."

"No," Cabot told him, "I couldn't — not without delaying you. The trail's too hot for that. If you'll put a fourth and last bullet into Cochise, the loss of a little thing like me won't matter much." He stopped short, and his chin dropped, weakly, undecided.

"Jack," he said, going up and running his hand in and out underneath the girths. He spoke almost too low to be heard, and the men who were nearest rode a few feet away. "Jack, will you do something for me? Will you — that is — there is a fellow named McDonald up at the Mescalero Agency. He's got a little four-year-old girl he's taking care of." He hurried along, looking away from Landor's puzzled face. "She's the daughter of a half-breed Mescalero woman, who was

killed by the Mexicans. If I don't come out of all this, will you get her? Tell McDonald I told you to. I'm her father."

He raised his eyes now, and they were appealing. "It's an awful lot to ask of you, Jack, even for old sake's sake. I know that. But the little thing is almost white, and I cared for her mother — in a way. I can't let her go back to the tribe." His lips quivered and he bit at them nervously. "I kept meaning to get her away somehow." There was a sort of pity on Landor's face, pity and half contempt. He had heard that from Cabot so often for so many years, "I kept meaning to do this thing or the other, somehow, some day." "But it looks as though you might have to do it now. Will you, lieutenant?" He tugged at the cinchings while he waited.

Landor was without impulses; the very reverse from boyhood of the man on the ground beside him, which was why, perhaps, it had come to be as it was now. He considered before he replied. But having considered, he answered that he would, and that he would do his best for the child always. Once he had said it, he might be trusted beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"Thank you," said Cabot, and drew his hand from the girths. He cut Landor short when he tried to change him again. "You are losing time," he told him, "and if you stay here from now to next week it won't do any good. I'll foot it to the water hole, if I can. Otherwise — " the feeble laugh once more as his eyes shifted to where a big, gray prairie wolf was going

across the flat, stopping now and then to watch them, then swinging on again.

They came around him and offered him their horses, dismounting even, and forcing the reins into his hands. "You don't know what you are doing," a corporal urged. "You'll never get out alive. If it ain't Indians, it'll be thirst." Then he looked into Cabot's face and saw that he did know, that he knew very well. And so they left him at last, with more of the tepid alkali water than they well could spare from their canteens, with two days' rations and an extra cartridge belt, and trotted on once more across the plain.

He stood quite still and erect, looking after them, a dead light of renunciation of life and hope in his eyes. They came in search of him two days later and scoured the valley and the hills. But the last they ever saw of him was then, following them, a tiny speck upon the desert, making southwest in the direction of the water hole. The big wolf had stopped again, and turned about, coming slowly after him, and two buzzards circled above him, casting down on his path the flitting shadows of their wings.

I

There was trouble at the San Carlos Agency, which was in no wise unusual in itself, but was upon this occasion more than ever discouraging. There had been a prospect of lasting peace, the noble Red-man was settling down in his filthy rancheria to become a good citizen, because he was tagged with little metal numbers, and was watched unceasingly, and forbidden the manufacture of tizwin, or the raising of the dead with dances, and was told that an appreciative government was prepared to help him if he would only help himself.

Then some bull-teams going to Camp Apache had stopped over night at the Agency. The teamsters had sold the bucks whiskey, and the bucks had grown very drunk. The representatives of the two tribes which were hereditary enemies, and which the special agent of an all-wise Interior Department had, nevertheless, shut up within the confines of the same reservation, therewith fell upon and slew each other, and the survivors went upon the warpath — metal tags and all. So the troops had been called out, and Landor's was at San Carlos.

Landor himself sat in his tent, upon his mess-chest, and by the light of a candle wrote a despatch which

was to go by courier the next morning. Gila valley mosquitoes were singing around his head, a knot of chattering squaws and naked children were peering into his tent, the air was oven-hot, coyotes were filling the night with their weird bark, and a papoose was bawling somewhere close by. Yet he would have been sufficiently content could he have been let alone — the one plea of the body military from all time. It was not to be. The declared and standing foes of that body pushed their way through the squaws and children. He knew them already. They were Stone of the Tucson press, sent down to investigate and report, and Barnwell, an Agency high official, who would gladly assist the misrepresentations, so far as in his power lay.

Landor knew that they were come to hear what he might have to say about it, and he had decided to say, for once, just what he thought, which is almost invariably unwise, and in this particular case proved exceedingly so, as any one could have foretold. On the principle that a properly conducted fist fight is opened by civilities, however, he mixed three toddies in as many tin coffee cups.

They said "how," and drank. After which Stone asked what the military were going to do about certain things which he specified, and implied the inability of the military to do anything for any one. Landor smiled indolently and said "Quien sabe?" Stone wished to be told if any one ever did know and suggested, acridly, that if the by-word of the Mexican were poco-tiempo, that of the troops was certainly

quien-sabe? Between the two the citizen got small satisfaction.

"I don't know," objected Landor; "you get the satisfaction of beginning the row pretty generally — as you did this time — and of saying what you think about us in unmistakable language after we have tried to put things straight for you."

Stone considered his dignity as a representative of the press, and decided that he would not be treated with levity. He would resent the attitude of the soldiery; but in his resentment he passed the bounds of courtesy altogether, forgetting whose toddy he had just drunk, and beneath whose tent pole he was seated. He said rude things about the military, — that it was pampered and inefficient and gold laced, and that it thought its mission upon earth fulfilled when it sat back and drew princely pay.

Landor recalled the twenty years of all winter campaigns, dry camps, forced marches, short rations, and long vigils and other annoyances that are not put down in the tactics, and smiled again, with a deep cynicism. Barnwell sat silent. He sympathized with Stone because his interests lay that way, but he was somewhat unfortunately placed between the military devil and the political deep sea.

Stone was something of a power in Tucson politics, and altogether a great man upon the territorial stump. He was proud of his oratory, and launched into a display of it now, painting luridly the wrongs of the citizen, who, it appeared, was a defenceless, honest, law-

abiding child of peace, yet passed his days in seeing his children slaughtered, his wife tortured, his ranches laid waste, and himself shot down and scalped.

Landor tried to interpose a suggestion that though the whole effect was undoubtedly good and calculated to melt a heart of iron, the rhetoric was muddled; but the reporter swept on; so he clasped his hands behind his head and leaning back against a tent pole, yawned openly. Stone came to an end at length, and had to mop his head with a very much bordered handkerchief. The temperature was a little high for so much effort. He met Landor's glance challengingly.

"Well done!" the officer commended. "But considering how it has heated you, you ought to have saved it for some one upon whom it would have had its effect — some one who wasn't round at the time of the Aravaypa Cañon business, for instance."

The Agency man thought a question would not commit him. He had not been round at that time, and he asked for information. The lieutenant gave it to him.

"It was a little spree they had here in '71. Some Tucson citizens and Papago Indians and Greasers undertook to avenge their wrongs and show the troops how it ought to be done. So they went to Aravaypa Cañon, where a lot of peaceable Indians were cutting hay, and surprised them one day at sunrise, and killed a hundred and twenty-five of them — mostly women and children.

The reporter interposed that it was the act of men maddened by grief and their losses.

"I dare say," Landor agreed; "it is certainly more

charitable to suppose that men who hacked up the bodies of babies, and abused women, and made away with every sort of loot, from a blanket to a string of beads, were mad. It was creditably thorough for madmen, though. And it was the starting-point of all the trouble that it took Crook two years to straighten out."

Stone held that the affair had been grossly exaggerated, and that the proof thereof lay in the acquittal of all accused of the crime, by a jury of their peers; and Landor said that the sooner that highly discreditable travesty on justice was forgotten, the better for the good fame of the territory. The press representative waxed eloquent once more, until his neck grew violet with suppressed wrath, which sputtered out now and then in profanity. The officer met his finest flights with cold ridicule, and the Agency man improved the opportunity by pouring himself a drink from the flask on the cot. In little it was the reproduction of the whole situation on the frontier — and the politician profited.

In those days some strange things happened at agencies. Toilet sets were furnished to the Apache, who has about as much use for toilet sets as the Greenlander has for cotton prints, and who would probably have used them for targets if he had ever gotten them — which he did not. Upon the table of a certain agent (and he was an honest man, let it be noted, for the thing was rare) there lay for some time a large rock, which he had labelled with delicate humor "sample of sugar furnished to this agency under — " but the name doesn't matter now. It was close on a

quarter of a century ago, and no doubt it is all changed since then. By the same working out, a schoolhouse built of sun-baked mud, to serve as a temple of learning for the Red-man, cost the government forty thousand dollars. The Apache children who sat within it could have acquired another of the valuable lessons of Ojo-blanco from the contractors.

Beef was furnished the Indians on the hoof and calculated by the pound, and the weight of some of those long-horn steers, once they got upon the Agency scales, would have done credit to a mastodon. By this method the Indian got the number of pounds of meat he was entitled to *per capita*, and there was some left over that the agent might dispose of to his friends. As for the heavy-weight steers, when the Apache received them, he tortured them to death with his customary ingenuity. It made the meat tender; and he was an epicure in his way. The situation in the territory, whichever way you looked at it, was not hopeful.

When the moon rose, Barnwell and Stone went away and left Landor again with the peeping squaws and the wailing papooses, the mosquitoes and the legacy of their enduring enmity, — an enmity not to be lightly despised, for it could be as annoying and far more serious than the stings of the river-bottom mosquitoes. As they walked across the gleaming dust, their bodies throwing long black shadows, two naked Indian boys followed them, creeping forward unperceived, dropping on the ground now and then, and wriggling along like snakes. They were practising for the future.

II

In the '70's the frontier was a fact and not a memory, and a woman in the Far West was a blessing sent direct from heaven, or from the East, which was much the same thing. Lieutenants besought the wives of their brother officers to bring out their sisters and cousins and even aunts, and very weird specimens of the sex sometimes resulted. But even these could reign as queens, dance, ride, flirt to their hearts' content — also marry, which is not always the corollary in these days. The outbreak of a reservation full of Indians was a small thing in comparison with the excitement occasioned by the expectation of a girl in the post.

There was now at Grant the prospect of a girl, and for days ahead the bachelors had planned about her. She was Landor's ward, — it was news to them that he had a ward, for he was not given to confidences, — and she was going to visit the wife of his captain, Mrs. Campbell. When they asked questions, Landor said she was eighteen years old, and that her name was Cabot, and that as he had not seen her for ten years he did not know whether she were pretty or not. But the vagueness surrounding her was rather attractive than otherwise, on the whole. It was not even known when she would arrive. There was no railroad to

Arizona. From Kansas she would have to travel by ambulance with the troops which were changing station.

There was only Mrs. Campbell who knew the whole story. Landor had gone to her for advice, as had been his custom since the days before she had preferred Campbell to him. "Felipa," he said, "writes that she is going to run away from school, if I don't take her away. She says she will, and she undoubtedly means it. I have always noticed that there is no indecision in her character."

Mrs. Campbell asked where she proposed running to.

Landor did not know; but she was part Apache, he said, and Harry Cabot's daughter, and it was pretty certain that with that blood in her veins she had the spirit of adventure.

She asked what he had thought of doing about it.

"I've thought of bringing her on here. But how can I? In a bachelor establishment? My sister won't have her at any terms. She suggested an orphan asylum from the first, and she hasn't changed her mind."

Mrs. Campbell appliquéd a black velvet imp on a green felt lambrequin, and thought. "Do you ever happen to realize that you have your hands very full?"

"Yes," he said shortly, "I realize it."

He sat staring over her head for a moment of silence. "I foresaw it when I told Cabot I'd take her."

"Might not an orphan asylum have been best, after all?"

"It might for me," he said, "but not for her, and I

told Cabot I'd do my best for her." It had seemed to him his plain duty, and he had done it, and he asked no approbation.

Mrs. Campbell took it as he did, for a matter of course. She wasted no words in expressing admiration for what he had done, but kept to the main issue, making herself useful, as women are rarely content to do when they deal with men, without indulging her taste for the sentimental. "Suppose I were to take her?" she suggested.

He opposed drawbacks. "You can't keep her always."

She smiled. "The chances that she will marry are excellent."

He did not answer at once, but sat watching the trumpeter come out of the adjutant's office to sound recall. "Yes, she will marry," he agreed; "if no one else marries her, I will. I am as old as her father would have been but it would save telling some fellow about her birth."

"Did the girl know her own story?" she asked.

She did not. He had merely told her that her father was his friend and had died on the plains. "She thinks her mother died at Stanton. It is so near the Mescalero Agency that I let it go at that."

They argued it from all sides during the whole of a day, and Campbell lent his advice, and the end of it was that Felipa Cabot came out to the land of her forbears.

Pending her arrival, Landor brought himself to look

upon it as his plain duty and only course to marry her. It would save her, and any man who might otherwise happen to love her, from learning what she was. That she might refuse to look at it in that way, did not much enter into his calculations. It required a strong effort for him to decide it so, but it was his way to pick out the roughest possible path before him, to settle within himself that it was that of duty, and to follow it without fagging or complaint. He dreaded any taint of Apache blood as he dreaded the venom of a rattler. He had seen its manifestations for twenty odd years, had seen the hostile savage and the civilized one, and shrank most from the latter. But he had promised Cabot to do his best by the waif, and the best he could see was to marry her. There was always before him, to urge him on to the sacrifice, the stalwart figure of his boyhood's friend, standing forsaken in the stretch of desert with the buzzards hovering over him in the burning sky. He permitted himself to hope, however, that she was not too obviously a squaw.

When the day came he rode out with most of the garrison to meet her. He was anxious. He recalled Anne of Cleves, and had a fellow-feeling for the King. By the time they came in sight of the marching troops, he had worked himself to such an implicit faith in the worst that he decided that the wide figure, heavily blue-veiled, and linen-dustered, on the back seat of the Dougherty was she. It is one of the strongest arguments of the pessimist in favor

of his philosophy, that the advantage of expecting the disagreeable lies in the fact that, if he meets with disappointment, it is necessarily a pleasant one.

Felipa Cabot proved to be a lithe creature, who rode beside the ambulance with the officers, and who, in spite of the dust and tan and traces of a hard march, was beautiful. In the reaction of the moment Landor thought her the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. But she froze the consequent warmth of his greeting with a certain indefinable stolidity, and she eyed him with an unabashed intention of determining whether he were satisfactory or not, which changed his position to that of the one upon approbation. If she had been less handsome, it would have been repellent.

Before they had reached the post, he had learned a good deal about her. The elderly major who had come with her from Kansas told him that a lieutenant by the name of Brewster was insanely in love with her, that the same Brewster was a good deal of an ass, — the two facts having no connection, however, — that she was an excellent travelling companion, always satisfied and always well. What the major did not tell him, but what he gathered almost at once, was that the girl had not endeared herself to any one ; she was neither loved nor disliked — the lieutenant's infatuation was not to be taken as an indication of her character, of course. But then she was beautiful, with her long, intent eyes, and strong brows and features cut on classic lines of perfection. So Landor left the major and cantered ahead to join her, where she rode with Brewster.

"Has the trip been hard?" he asked.

She answered that she had enjoyed it all, every day of it, and Brewster joined in with ecstatic praises of her horsemanship and endurance, finishing with the unlucky comment that she rode like an Indian.

"Apaches ride badly, don't they?" she said, with calm matter of fact. "If you mean that I am hard on my horse, though, you are right." Her voice was exquisitely sweet, without modulation.

In the weeks that followed, Landor spent days and some nights — those when he sat up to visit the guard, as a rule — attempting to decide why his ward repelled him. She seemed to be quite like any other contented and natural young girl. She danced, and courted admiration, within the bounds of propriety; she was fond of dress, and rather above the average in intelligence. Usually she was excellent company, whimsical and sweet-humored. She rode well enough, and learned — to his intense annoyance — to shoot with a bow and arrow quite remarkably, so much so that they nicknamed her Diana. He had remonstrated at first, but there was no reason to urge, after all. Archery was quite a feminine sport.

When his analysis of her failed, he went to Mrs. Campbell again. "Do you grow fond of Felipa?" he asked point blank.

She tried to parry and evade, but he would not have it, and obliged her to admit that she did not. "Not that I dislike her," she explained. "I like to have her round. I dare say it is a whim."

He shook his head. "It is not a whim. It is the same with every one. Of course Brewster has lost his head, but that argues nothing. The endearing quality seems to be lacking in her."

She sat considering deeply. She was rocking the baby, with its little fair head lying in the hollow of her shoulder, and Landor found himself wondering whether Felipa could ever develop motherliness. "It is quite intangible," Mrs. Campbell half crooned, for the baby's lids were drooping heavily. "I can't find that she lacks a good characteristic. I study her all the time. Perhaps the fault is in ourselves, as much as anything, because we insist upon studying her as a problem, instead of simply a very young girl. She is absolutely truthful, — unless she happens to have a grudge against some one, and then she lies without any scruple at all, — and she is generous and unselfish, and very amiable with the children, too."

Landor asked, with a gleam of hope, if they were attached to her.

"Yes," she told him, "they are, and it is that makes me think that the fault may be ours. She is so patient with them."

At that moment Felipa herself came up the steps and joined them on the porch. She walked with the gait of a young athlete. Her skirts were short enough to leave her movements unhampered, and she wore on her feet a pair of embroidered moccasins. She seemed to be drawing the very breath of life into her quivering nostrils, and she smiled on them both good-humoredly.

"Look," she said, going up to Landor with a noiseless tread that made him shiver almost visibly. Mrs. Campbell watched them. She was sorry for him.

Felipa held out her hand and showed a little brown bird that struggled feebly. She explained that its leg was broken, and he drew back instinctively. There was not a trace of softness or pity in her sweet voice. Then he took the bird in his own big hand and asked her how it had happened. "I did it with an arrow," said Diana, unslinging her quiver, which was a barbaric affair of mountain-lion skin, red flannel, and beads.

"I can't see why you should take pleasure in shooting these harmless things," he said impatiently; "the foot-hills are full of quail, and there are ducks along the creek. For that matter you might try your skill on prairie dogs, it seems to me."

She looked down at the curled toe of her moccasin with a certain air of repentance, and answered his question as to what she meant to do with it by explaining that she meant to keep it for a pet.

He stroked its head with his finger as it lay still, opening and shutting its bright little eyes. "It won't live," he told her, and then the thought occurred to him to put her to the test. He held the bird out to her. "Wring its neck," he said, "and end its misery."

She showed no especial repugnance at the idea, but refused flatly, nevertheless. "I can't do that," she said, dropping down into the hammock and swinging herself with the tip of her foot on the floor.

"I fail to see why not. You can wound it."

"But that is sport," she answered carelessly.

He felt that he ought to dislike her cordially, but he did not. He admired her, on the contrary, as he would have admired a fine boy. She seemed to have no religion, no ideals, and no petty vanity; therefore, from his point of judgment, she was not feminine. Perhaps the least feminine thing about her was the manner in which she appeared to take it for granted that he was going to marry her, without his having said, as yet, a word to that effect. In a certain way it simplified matters, and in another it made them more difficult. It is not easy to ask a woman to marry you where she looks into your eyes unhesitatingly. But Landor decided that it had to be done. She had been in the post four months, and with the standing exception of Brewster, whom she discouraged resolutely, none of the officers cared for her beyond the flirtation limit.

So one night when they were sitting upon the Campbells' steps, he took the plunge. She had been talking earnestly, discussing the advisability of filing off the hammer of the pistol he had given her, to prevent its catching on the holster when she wanted to draw it quickly. One of her long, brown hands was laid on his knee, with the most admirable lack of self-consciousness. He put his own hand upon it, and she looked up questioningly. She was unused to caresses from any but the two Campbell children, and her frank surprise held a reproach that softened his voice almost to tenderness.

"Do you think you could love me, Felipa?" he asked, without any preface at all.

She said "Yes" as frankly as she would have said it to the children. It was blighting to any budding romance, but he tried hard nevertheless to save the next question from absolute baldness. He had a resentful sort of feeling that he was entitled to at least a little idealism. As she would not give it, he tried to find it for himself, noting the grace of her long free neck, the wealth of her coarse black hair, and the beauty of her smiling mouth. But the smiling mouth answered his low-spoken "Will you marry me then, dear?" with the same frank assent. "Not for a good while, though," she added. "I am too young." That was all, and in a moment she was telling him some of Brewster's absurdities, with a certain appreciation of the droll that kept it from being malicious.

As he had made Mrs. Campbell his confidante from the first, he told her about this too, now, and finished with the half-helpless, half-amused query as to what he should do. "It may be any length of time before she decides that she is old enough, and it never seems to occur to her that this state of things can't go on forever, that she is imposing upon you." "And the most serious part of it," he added after a while, "is that she does not love me."

"You don't love her, for that matter, either," Mrs. Campbell reminded him. But she advised the inevitable, — to wait and let it work itself out.

So he waited and stood aside somewhat, to watch

the course of Brewster's suit. He derived some little amusement from it, too, but he wondered with rather a deeper tinge of anxiety than was altogether necessary what the final outcome would be.

One morning Brewster met Felipa coming from the hospital and carrying a wide-mouthed bottle. He joined her and asked if the little lady were going to grow flowers in it. The little lady, who was quite as tall as and a good deal more imposing than himself, answered that it was for a vinagrone. He remonstrated. She was surely not going to make a pet of one of those villanous insects. No. She had caught a tarantula, too, and she was going to make them fight.

"Were you catching the tarantula yesterday when I saw you lying upon the ground by the dump heap?"

"Yes," she said, "did you see me? I dare say you thought I was communing with Nature in the midst of the old tin cans and horseshoes. Well, I wasn't. I was watching the trap of a tarantula nest, and I caught him when he came out. I've watched that hole for three days," she announced triumphantly. "As for the vinagrone, the cook found him in his tent, and I bottled him. Come and see the fight," she invited amiably.

Presently she returned with two bottles. In one was the tarantula, an especially large and hideous specimen, hairy and black, with dull red tinges. In the other the vinagrone, yet more hideous. She went down to the side of the house and emptied both into the wide-mouthed bottle.

Brewster was in agony. He reached out and caught her hand. "My darling," he cried, "take care!"

She turned on him quickly. "Let me be," she commanded, and he obeyed humbly. Then she corked the bottle and shook it so that the animals rolled on top of each other, and laying it on the ground bent over it with the deepest interest. Brewster watched too, fascinated in spite of himself. It was so very ugly. The two wicked little creatures fought desperately. But after a time they withdrew to the sides of the bottle, and were quite still. The tarantula had left a leg lying loose.

Felipa turned from them and waited, clasping her hands and smiling up at Brewster. He, misinterpreting, felt encouraged and begged her to leave the disgusting insects. He had something very different to talk about. She said that she did not want to hear it, and would he bet on the tarantula or the vinagrone?

"Don't bring them into it," he implored. "If you will not come away, I will tell you now, Felipa, that I love you." He was more in earnest than Landor had been. She felt that herself. His voice broke, and he paled.

But she only considered the insects, which were beginning to move again, and answered absently that she knew it, that he had said it before. "Oh! Mr. Brewster, bet quickly," she urged.

He caught her by the arm, exasperated past all civility, and shook her. "Do you hear me, Felipa Cabot? I tell you that I love you."

She was strong, slender as she was, and she freed herself almost without effort. And yet he would not be warned. "Don't you love me?" he insisted, as though she had not already made it plain enough.

"No," she said shortly. "You had better bet."

He made as if to kick the bottle away, but quick as a flash she was on her feet and facing him.

"You touch that," she said resolutely, "and I'll let them both loose on you."

He turned on his heel and left her.

Landor and the adjutant came by, and she called to them. The adjutant backed the vinagrone with a bag of sutler's candy, and Felipa took the tarantula. It was mainly legless trunk, but still furious. Landor studied her. She was quiet, but her eyes had grown narrow, and they gleamed curiously at the sight of the torn legs and feelers scattering around the bottle, wriggling and writhing. She was at her very worst.

It ended in victory for the vinagrone, but he died from his wounds an hour later. Felipa told Landor so, as they started for a ride, early in the afternoon. "The vinagrone is dead," she said; "Mr. Brewster didn't like my fighting them." Then she assumed the lofty dignity that contrasted so oddly sometimes with her childish simplicity. "He lacks tact awfully. Think of it! He took the occasion to say that he loved me. As though he had not told me so a dozen times before."

"And you — what did you say?" asked Landor. He was a little surprised to find how anxiously he

waited, and the extent of his relief when she answered, "I told him to let me be, or I would set them loose on him."

Official business called Brewster to the Agency next day. He stopped overnight, on the way, at a ranch whose owners depended more upon passing travellers than upon the bad soil and the thin cattle. And here fate threw in his way one whom he would have gone well out of that way to find.

It was a civilian with whom he was obliged to share his room. He did not fancy having to share his room at all, in the first place, and this and other things made his temper bad. The civilian, on the other hand, was in good temper, and inclined to be communicative. He tried several ways of opening a conversation, and undaunted by rebuffs tried yet once more. Like Bruce and the spider, it was exactly the seventh time that he succeeded.

"How's things up at Grant?" he drawled through his beard, as he took off that sacred and ceremonious garment known to the true frontiersman as his vest, and without which he feels as lost as without his high-heeled boots.

Brewster mumbled out of a towel that he guessed they were all right, and implied what the dickens did it matter to him how they were.

"I hear you got Jack Landor up there?"

Then Brewster began to listen.

"Yes," he said, emptying the soap-caked water from the Indian basket wash basin upon the earth floor;

"why?" — "I used to know him in '61. He came up to the Mescalero Agency then, not long before the Texans overran the place. I recollect there was a sort of blizzard and it was seventeen below. He came after a kid me and another feller'd been looking after. Pretty little cuss, about four years old. I gave her her first bow'n arrow."

Brewster took on an elaborate and entirely unnecessary air of indifference, and yawned to heighten the effect. "What did he want of the child?" he asked negligently.

"Her father was dead. He left her to him."

"Who was her father?" Brewster wanted to know.

The man told him. "He'd been a private up to Stanton, and had been killed by some of Cochise's people that summer. Her mother was a half-breed by the name of Felipa. Good-looking squaw, but dead, too — killed by Mexicans. Do you happen to know whatever became of the kid?"

Brewster told him that she was with Landor at the post now.

"She must be a woman by this time," reflected the civilian. "Is she married to him?"

Brewster explained that she was visiting Captain Campbell's family.

Did she show the squaw? he asked. "Not unless you knew it was there," the officer said tolerantly. Then he went to bed and slept with that peace of mind which comes of a proud consciousness of holding the handle of the whip. In the morning he got the

man's name and address before he went on up to the Agency.

There he heard of Landor again. This time it was through Barnwell, and the descriptions were picturesque. Brewster encouraged them, paying a good deal more heed to them than to the little complaints of the Indians he had been sent up to investigate. Then he returned to Grant, taking with him in the ambulance an enlisted man returning to receive his discharge.

Barnwell had told Brewster about him also. "His name is Cairness,—Charles Cairness,—and he's got a lot of fool theories too," he explained. "He goes in for art, makes some pretty good paintings of the Indians, and has picked up some of their lingo. Made himself agreeable to the squaws, I guess. The interpreter says there's one got her nose cut off by her buck, on his account."

Brewster suggested that he thought Crook had put a stop to those mutilations, but the official shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know how true it was, and I certainly ain't going to look her up in her rancheria to find out."

The hero of the episode rode in the ambulance, sitting on the front seat, holding his carbine across his knees, and peering with sharp, far-sighted blue eyes over the alkali flats. Occasionally he took a shot at a jack rabbit and brought it down unfailingly, but the frontiersman has no relish for rabbit meat, and it was left where it dropped, for the crows. He also brought down a sparrow hawk wounded in the wing, and, hav-

ing bound up the wound, offered it to Brewster, who took it as an opening to a conversation and tried to draw him out.

"Barnwell tells me," he began, "that you have picked up a good deal of Apache."

"Some Sierra Blanca, sir," said the soldier. It was respectful enough, and yet there was somewhere in the man's whole manner an air of equality, even superiority, that exasperated the lieutenant. It was contrary to good order and military discipline that a private should speak without hesitation, or without offence to the English tongue.

Brewster resented it, and so the next thing he said was calculated to annoy. "He says you are quite one of them."

"He is mistaken, sir."

"Have you an Indian policy?"

Cairness's eyes turned from a little ground owl on the top of a mound and looked him full in the face. "I really can't see, sir," he said, "how it can matter to any one."

It did not in the least matter to Brewster, but he was one of those trying people whom Nature has deprived of the instinct for knowing when to stop. A very perceptible sneer twitched his lips. "You seem to be English," he said.

"I am," announced the soldier.

Now it is a hazardous undertaking to question an Englishman who does not care to be questioned. A person of good judgment would about as lief try to

poke up a cross lion to play. But Brewster persisted, and asked if Cairness would be willing to live among the Apaches.

"They have their good traits, sir," said the man, civilly, "and chief among them is that they mind their own business."

It was impossible to misunderstand, and Brewster was vexed beyond the bounds of all wisdom. "The squaws have their good traits, too, I guess. I hear one had her nose cut off on your account." He should not have said it. He knew it, and he knew that the private knew it, but the man made no reply whatever.

The remainder of the drive Cairness devoted to caring for the broken wing of the hawk, and, during halts, to sketching anything that presented itself, — the mules, the driver, passing Mexicans, or the cows trying to graze from ground where the alkali formed patches of white scum. He also accomplished a fine caricature of the lieutenant, and derived considerable silent amusement therefrom.

The night of their return to the post, Cairness, crossing the parade ground shortly before retreat, saw Felipa. He had been walking with his eyes on the earth, debating within himself the question of his future, whether he should reënlist, succumb to the habit of the service, which is to ambition and endeavor what opium is to the system, or drop back into the yet more aimless life he had been leading five years before, when a fit of self-disgust had caused him to decide that he was good for nothing but a trooper, if even that.

A long sunset shadow fell across his path, and he looked up. Felipa was walking beside a little white burro, and holding Mrs. Campbell's golden-curled baby upon its back. She carried her head superbly erect, and her step, because of the moccasins, was quite noiseless. The glow of the sunset shone in her unflinching eyes, and lost itself in the dull black mass of her hair. She studied his face calmly, with a perfectly impersonal approval.

Cairness went on, back to the barracks, and sitting at the troop clerk's desk, made a memory sketch of her. It did not by any means satisfy him, but he kept it nevertheless.

That night he sat upon the edge of his bunk, in the darkness, after taps, with his elbows on his knees and his chin in his hand, and thought the matter to a conclusion. The conclusion was that he would not reënlist, and the reason for it was the girl he had met on the parade ground. He knew the power that beauty had over him. It was as real, as irresistible, as a physical sensation. And he thought Felipa Cabot the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. "She should be done in a heroic bronze," he told himself; "but as I can't do it, and as I haven't the right to so much as think about her, I shall be considerably happier at a distance, so I'll go."

He went the next day but one, riding out of the post at daylight. And he saw Felipa once more. She was standing by the creek, drawing an arrow from her quiver and fitting it to her bow. Then she poised the

toe of her left foot lightly upon the ground, bent back, and drew the bow almost to a semicircle. The arrow flew straight up into the shimmering air, straight through the body of a little jay, which came whirling, spinning down among the trees. Felipa gave a quick leap of delight at having made such a shot, then she darted down in search of the bird. And Cairness rode on.

III

"Hullo there!"

Cairness drew up his pinto pony in front of a group of log cabins, and, turning in his saddle, rested his hands upon the white and bay flanks. "Hullo-o-o!" he repeated.

A mule put its head over the wall of a corral and pricked interrogative ears. Then two children, as unmistakably Angles as those of Gregory the Great, came around the corner, hand in hand, and stood looking at him. And at length a man, unmistakably an Angle too, for all his top boots and flannel shirt and cartridge belt, came striding down to the gate. He opened it and said, "Hullo, Cairness, old chap," and Cairness said, "How are you, Kirby?" which answered to the falling upon each other's neck and weeping, of a more effusive race.

Then they walked up to the corral together. Kirby introduced him to his two partners, Englishmen also, and finished nailing up the boards of a box stall which a stallion had kicked down in the night. After that he threw down his hammer, took two big nails from his mouth, and sat upon the tongue of a wagon to talk long and earnestly, after the manner of men who have shared a regretted past.

"And so," said Kirby, as he drew a sack of short cut from his pocket and filled his brier, "and so you have chucked up the army? What are you going to do next? Going in for art?"

"Good Lord! no," Cairness's smile was rueful. "I've lost all ambition of that sort years since. I'm too old. I've knocked about too long, and I dare say I may as well knock about to the end."

Kirby suggested, with a hesitation that was born not of insincerity but of delicacy, that they would be awfully glad to have him stop with them and help run the Circle K Ranch. But Cairness shook his head. "Thanks. I'll stop long enough to recall the old times, though I dare say it would be better to forget them, wouldn't it? Ranching isn't in my line. Not that I am at all sure what is in my line, for that matter."

After a while Kirby went back to his work, directing several Mexicans, in hopelessly bad Spanish, and laboring with his own hands at about the proportion of three to one.

Cairness, talking to one of the other men, who was mending a halter, watched him, and recalled the youth in spotless white whom he had last seen lounging on the deck of an Oriental liner and refusing to join the sports committee in any such hard labor as getting up a cricket match. It was cooler here in the Arizona mountains, to be sure; but it was an open question if life were as well worth living.

When the sun was at midheaven, and the shadows of the pines beyond the clearing fell straight, the clang-

ing of a triangle startled the mountain stillness. The Mexicans dropped their tools, and the white teamster left a mule with its galled back half washed.

In a moment there were only the four Englishmen in the corral.

Kirby finished greasing the nut of a wagon. Then he went to the water trough and washed his hands and face, drying them upon a towel in the harness room. He explained that they didn't make much of a toilet for luncheon.

"Luncheon!" said Cairness, as he smoothed his hair in front of a speckled and wavy mirror, which reflected all of life that came before it, in sickly green, "cabalistic word, bringing before me memories of my wasted youth. There was a chap from home in my troop, until he deserted, and when we were alone we would say luncheon below our breaths. But I haven't eaten anything except dinner for five years."

At the house he met Kirby's wife, a fair young woman, who clung desperately here in the wilderness, to the traditions, and to as many of the customs as might be, of her south-of-England home.

The log cabin was tidy. There were chintz curtains at the windows, much of the furniture, of ranch manufacture, was chintz covered, the manta of the ceiling was unstained, there were pictures from London Christmas papers on the walls, and photographs of the fair women at "home."

There were also magazines and a few books in more than one language, wild flowers arranged in many sorts

of strange jars, and in the corner, by an improvised couch, a table stacked with cups and plates of Chelsea-Derby, which were very beautiful and very much out of place.

The log cabins were built, five of them, to form a square. The largest contained the sitting room and a bedroom, the three others, bedrooms and a storehouse, and the kitchen and dining room were in the fifth.

When they went into this last, the ranch hands were already at a long oilcloth-covered table. The Kirbys sat at a smaller one, laid with linen, and the lank wife of one of the men served them all, with the help of a Mexican boy.

Cairness pitied Mrs. Kirby sincerely. But if she felt herself an object of sympathy, she did not show it.

The woman fairly flung the ill-cooked food upon the table, with a spitefulness she did not try to conceal. And she manifested her bad will most particularly toward the pretty children. Cairness felt his indignation rise against Kirby for having brought a woman to this, in the name of love.

"We have tea at five," Mrs. Kirby told him, as they finished, and her husband started out to superintend and help with the digging of an acequia.

So at five o'clock Cairness, coming again into that part of the cabin which his hostess persistently named the drawing-room, found the three Englishmen taking their tea, and a little man in clerical garb observing the rite with considerable uncertainty. He would have no tea himself, and his tone expressed a deep distrust

of the beverage. By the side of his chair stood a tall silk hat. It was in all probability the only one in the territories, or west of the Missouri, for that matter, and it caught Cairness's eye at once, the more especially as it was pierced by two round holes. As he stirred his tea and ate the thin slices of buttered bread, his glance wandered frequently to the hat.

"Lookin' at my stove-pipe?" asked the Reverend Mr. Taylor. "Only one in these parts, I reckon," and he vouchsafed an explanation of the holes. "Them holes? A feller in Tucson done that for me."

What had he done to the fellow, if he might ask, Cairness inquired.

"What did I do? The same as he done unto me. Let the air into his sombrero." He told them that he was studying the flora of the country, and travelling quite alone, with an Indian pony, a pack-mule, and a dog — a prospector's outfit, in short.

After tea the ranchers settled down to smoke and read. The Reverend Taylor brought out his collection of specimens and dilated upon them to Cairness.

"I put them in this here book," he said, "betwixt the leaves, and then I put the book under my saddle and set on it. I don't weigh so much, but it works all right," he added, looking up with a naïve smile that reached from one big ear to the other. "To-morrow," he told him later, "I'm going to ride over here to Tucson again. What way might you be takin'?"

"I think perhaps I'll go with you, if you'll wait over a day," Cairness told him. He had taken a distinct

fancy to the little botanist who wore his clerical garb while he rode a bronco and drove a pack-mule over the plains and mountains, and who had no fear of the Apache nor of the equally dangerous cow-boy. Cairness asked him further about the hat. "That chimney-pot of yours," he said, "don't you find it rather uncomfortable? It is hot, and it doesn't protect you. Why do you wear it?"

The little man picked it up and contemplated it, with his head on one side and a critical glance at its damaged condition. Then he smoothed its roughness with the palm of his rougher hand. "Why do I wear it?" he drawled calmly; "well, I reckon to show 'em that I can."

At six o'clock Kirby knocked the ashes from his pipe, the other two men, who had buried themselves in the last *Cornhill* and *Punch* with entire disregard of the rest of the room, put down the magazines, and all of them rose. "We dine at seven," Mrs. Kirby said to Taylor and Cairness as she passed through the door, followed by her husband.

"Where are they all goin' to?" the Reverend Taylor asked in plaintive dismay. He had risen to his feet because he had seen Cairness do it, and now he sat again because Cairness had dropped back on the couch. He was utterly at sea, but he felt that the safest thing to do would be that which every one else did. He remembered that he had felt very much the same once when he had been obliged to attend a funeral service in a Roman Catholic Church. All the purple and fine

linen of the Scarlet Woman and the pomp and circumstance surrounding her had bewildered him in about this same way.

Cairness reached out for the discarded *Cornhill*, and settled himself among the cushions. "They're going to dress, I rather think," he said. The minister almost sprang from his chair. "Good Lord! I ain't got any other clothes," he cried, looking ruefully at his dusty black.

"Neither have I," Cairness consoled him, from the depths of a rehearsal of the unwisdom of Ismaïl Pasha.

The Reverend Taylor sat in silence for a time, reflecting. Then he broke forth again, a little querulously. "What in thunderation do they dine at such an hour for?" Cairness explained that it was an English custom to call supper dinner, and to have it very late.

"Oh!" said Taylor, and sat looking into the fire.

A few minutes before seven they all came back into the sitting room. The men wore black coats, by way of compromise, and Mrs. Kirby and the children were in white.

"Like as not she does up them boiled shirts and dresses herself, don't you think?" was the minister's awed comment to Cairness, as they went to bed that night in the bare little room.

"Like as not," Cairness agreed.

"She's mighty nice looking, ain't she?"

Cairness said "yes" rather half heartedly. That fresh, sweet type was insipid to him now, when there was still so fresh in his memory the beauty of a black-

haired girl, with eagle eyes that did not flinch before the sun's rays at evening or at dawn.

"I'll bet the help don't like the seven o'clock dinner."

Cairness suggested that they were given their supper at six.

"I know that. But they don't like it, all the same. And I'll bet them cutaways riles them, too."

Cairness himself had speculated upon that subject a good deal, and had noticed with a slight uneasiness the ugly looks of some of the ranch hands. "They are more likely to have trouble in that quarter than with the Indians," he said to himself. For he had seen much, in the ranks, of the ways of the disgruntled, free-born American.

Before he left with Taylor on the next morning but one, he ventured to warn Kirby. But he was met with a stolid "I was brought up that way," and he knew that argument would be entirely lost.

"Over here to Tucson" was a three days' ride under the most favorable circumstances; but with the enthusiastic botanist dismounting at short intervals to make notes and press and descant upon specimens, it was five days before they reached, towards nightfall, the metropolis of the plains.

They went at once for supper to the most popular resort of the town, the Great Western Saloon and Restaurant. It was a long adobe room, the whitewash of which was discolored by lamp smoke and fly specks and stains. There were also bullet holes and marks of other missiles. At one end was a bar, with a tin top

for the testing of silver coins. Several pine tables were set out with cracked sugar bowls, inch-thick glasses, bottles of pickles and condiments, still in their paper wrappings, and made filthy by flies, dust, and greasy hands. Already there were half a dozen cowboys and Mexicans, armed to the teeth, standing about.

They glanced sideways at the big Englishman, who appeared to be one of themselves, and at the little minister. On him, more especially on his hat, their eyes rested threateningly. They had heard of him before, most of them. They answered his genial greeting surlily, but he was quite unruffled. He beamed upon the room as he seated himself at one of the tables and ordered supper, for which, in obedience to a dirty sign upon the wall, he paid in advance.

Having finished, he left Cairness to his own devices, and dragging a chair under a bracket lamp, set peacefully about reading the newspapers. For fully an hour no one heeded him. Cairness talked to the bartender and stood treat to the aimless loungers. He had many months of back pay in his pocket, and to save was neither in his character nor in the spirit of the country.

The ill-smelling room filled, and various games, chiefly faro and monte, began. At one table two men were playing out a poker game that was already of a week's duration. The reek of bad liquor mingled with the smell of worse tobacco and of Mexican-cured leather — like which there is no odor known to the senses, so pungent and permeating and all-pervading it

is. Several of the bracket lamps were sending up thin streams of smoke.

The Reverend Taylor gradually became aware that the air was very bad. He laid down the newspaper and looked round.

Then a big cow-boy left the bar and loitering over, with a clink of spurs, touched him on the shoulder. "The drinks are on you," he menaced. The minister chose to ignore the tone. He rose, smiling, and stretching his cramped arms. "All right, my friend, all right," he said, and going with the big fellow to the bar he gave a general invitation.

In the expectation of some fun the men gathered round. Those at the tables turned in their chairs and sat watching and pulling at their fierce mustaches as they peered from under the brims of their sombreros. In the midst of them all the little parson looked even smaller than he was. But he was sweetly undaunted and good-humored.

When the barkeeper had served the others, he turned to him. "What'll you take?" he demanded, not too courteously.

"I'll take a lemon soda, thanks," said Taylor.

There followed one of those general pauses as explosive as a pistol shot.

Then the cow-boy who had touched him on the shoulder suggested that he had better take a man's drink.

But he was not to be changed. "I'll take lemon soda," he said to the tender, with an amiability that the cow-boy made the mistake of taking for indecision.

"You better do what I say!" He was plainly spoiling for a fight.

But the minister still refused to see it. He looked him very squarely in the eyes now, however. "See here, I am going to take lemon pop, my friend," he said.

The friend swore earnestly that he would take what he was told to.

"You are mistaken, my good fellow, because I won't." There was not the shadow of hesitation in his voice, nor did he lower his mild blue eyes.

The cow-boy broadened the issue. "You will, and you'll take off that plug, too, or I'll know what for."

"I reckon you'll know what for, then," beamed Taylor, immovably.

Cairness had been standing afar off, with his hands in his pockets, watching with a gleam of enjoyment under his knitted brows, but he began to see that there threatened to be more to this than mere baiting; that the desperado was growing uglier as the parson grew more firmly urbane. He drew near his small travelling companion and took his hands suddenly from his pockets, as the cow-boy whipped out a brace of six-shooters and pointed them at the hat.

Slowly, with no undue haste whatever, the Reverend Taylor produced from beneath the skirts of his clerical garb another revolver. There was a derisive and hilarious howl. When it had subsided, he turned to the barkeeper. "Got my lemon pop ready?" he asked. The

man pushed it over to him, and he took it up in his left hand.

"Drop that!" called the cow-boy.

"Here's how," said the parson, and raised his glass. A bullet shattered it in his grasp.

Cairness, his hand on the butt of his own pistol, wondered, a little angrily, if Taylor were never going to be roused.

He had looked down at the broken glass and the stream of water, and then up quite as calmly but a little less smilingly. "If you do that again, I'll shoot," he said. "Give me another pop."

There was a chuckle from the group, and a chorus to the effect that they would be eternally condemned, the truth of which was patent in their faces. "Leave the little codger be," some one suggested; "he ain't skeered worth a sour apple."

It would have become the sentiment of the crowd in another moment, but the little codger took up the second glass, and raised it again. Then it fell smashing to the floor. A second bullet had broken his wrist.

Cairness started forward and levelled his Colt, but the divine was too quick for him. He fired, and the cow-boy sank down, struggling, shot through the thigh. As he crouched, writhing, on the ground, he fired again, but Cairness kicked the pistol out of his hand, and the bullet, deflected, went crashing in among the bottles.

"Now," said Taylor, distinctly, "oblige me with another lemon pop, mister." A cheer went up, and the minister standing above his fallen enemy raised the

third glass. "Here's to your better judgment next time, my friend. 'Tain't the sombrero makes the shot," he said. His seamed, small face was pale underneath its leathery skin, but by not so much as a quiver of an eyelid did he give any further sign of pain.

"The gentleman who broke them glasses can settle for his part of the fun," he said, as he paid his reckoning. Then he drew Cairness aside and held out the limp wrist to be bound, supporting it with his other hand. And presently they went out from the restaurant, where the powder smoke was added to the other smells, and hung low, in streaks, in the thick atmosphere, to hunt up a surgeon.

The surgeon, whose lore was not profound, and whose pharmacy exhibited more reptiles in alcohol than drugs, set the bones as best he knew how, which was badly; and, taking a fancy to Taylor, offered him and Cairness lodgings for the night, — the hospitality of the West being very much, in those times, like that of the days when the preachers of a new Gospel were bidden to enter into a house and there abide until they departed from that place.

In the morning Cairness left them together and started for the San Carlos Agency. He was to meet a prospector there, and to begin his new fortunes by locating some mines.

IV

It was a bitterly cold January morning. There had been a rain in the night, and the clouds yet hung gray over Mt. Graham and the black gap. The wet wind went howling over the valley, so that the little flag at the top of the staff snapped and whipped as though it would be torn from the halyards. Sunday inspection and guard mounting had been chilling ceremonies, performed in overcoats that were hardly more blue than the men's faces. Having finished them, Brewster hurried across the parade to Captain Campbell's quarters.

He found Felipa curled on the blanket in front of a great fire, and reading by the glare of the flames, which licked and roared up the wide chimney, a history of the Jesuit missionaries. It was in French, and she must have already known it by heart, for it seemed to be almost the only book she cared about. She had become possessed of its three volumes from a French priest who had passed through the post in the early winter and had held services there. He had been charmed with Felipa and with her knowledge of his own tongue. It was a truly remarkable knowledge, considering that it had been gained at a boarding-school.

"You speak with the utmost fluency, my daughter,"

he had commended, and she had explained that she found expression more easy in French.

"It is curious," she said, "but it has always seemed as though English were not my native tongue."

When the father returned to Tucson, he had sent her the history, and she had read and reread it. In a way she was something of a linguist, for she had picked up a good deal of Spanish from Mexicans about the post, chiefly from the nurse of the Campbell children.

There is a certain class of persons to whom it is always irritating to find any one reading a book. It rubs them the wrong way instantly. They will frequently argue that their own, and the best, manner of studying life is from nature — an excellent theory in sound, and commonly accepted as unanswerable, but about as practical in fact as the study of music on the instrument alone, without primer or method.

The mere sight of Felipa on the buffalo robe before the fire, poring over the old history, exasperated Brewster. "That book again?" he said crossly, as he drew up a chair and held out his hands to the flames; "you must know it by heart."

"I do," she answered, blinking lazily.

He reflected that it is a trait of the semi-civilized and of children that they like their tales often retold. But he did not say so. He was holding that in reserve. Instead, he changed the subject, with an abrupt inquiry as to whether she meant to ride to-day. "I suppose not?" he added.

"I do, though," she said perversely, as she bent her

head and tried to put into order the tumbled mass of her hair. "I am going at eleven o'clock."

"Alone?"

"No, not alone."

"It is bitterly cold."

"I don't mind, and neither does Captain Landor." Her guardian had recently gotten his captaincy.

Brewster's irritation waxed. "Landor again?" he queried suggestively.

"Landor again," she yawned, ignoring his meaning-fraught tone. But she watched his face from under her long lashes.

He glanced over his shoulder at the door. It was closed; so he leaned forward and spoke in a lower voice. "Felipa, are you going to marry Landor, or are you not?"

It was more than a mere impertinent question, and she did not pretend to ignore it any longer. She clasped her hands slowly about her knees and looked straight at him.

But he was unabashed. "What is he to you?" he insisted.

She thought for a moment before she answered. Then she spoke deliberately, and there was a purring snarl under her voice. "It is none of your business that I can see. But I will tell you this much, he is a man I respect; and that is more than I have said of you when I have been asked the same question."

"It is not only my business," he said, overlooking the last, and bending more eagerly forward, "it is not

only my business, it is the business of the whole post. You are being talked about, my dear young lady."

She sprang to her feet so suddenly that her arm struck him a blow in the face, and stood close in front of him, digging her nails into her palms and breathing hard. "If you — if you dare to say that again, I will kill you. I can do it. You know that I can, and I will. I mean what I say, I will kill you." And she did mean what she said, for the moment, at any rate. There was just as surely murder in her soul as though those long, strong hands had been closed on his throat. Her teeth were bared and her whole face was distorted with fury and the effort of controlling it. She drew up a chair, after a moment, and sat in it. It was she who was leaning forward now, and he had shrunk back, a little cowed. "I know what you are trying to do," she told him, more quietly, her lips quivering into a sneer, "you are trying to frighten me into marrying you. But you can't do it. I never meant to, and now I would die first."

He saw that the game had reached that stage where he must play his trump card, if he were to have any chance. "You are a mean little thing," he laughed. "It is the Apache blood, I suppose."

She sat for a moment without answering. It was less astonishment than that she did not understand. She knitted her brow in a puzzled frown.

But he mistook her silence for dismay, and went on. "It is only what one might expect from the daughter of a drunken private and a Mescalero squaw."

She was still silent, but she leaned nearer, watching his face, her lips drawn away from her sharp teeth, and her eyes narrowing. She understood now.

In his growing uneasiness he blundered on rashly. "You didn't know it? But it is true. Ask your guardian. Do you think he would have you for a wife?" He gave a short laugh. "He hates an Apache as he does a Gila monster. Very few men would be willing to risk it."

She leaned back in her chair, tapping her foot upon the floor. It was the only sign of excitement, but the look of her face was not good.

Brewster avoided it, and became absorbed in making the tips of his fingers meet as he pressed his hands together.

"Still," said Felipa, too quietly, "I would rather be the daughter of a drunken private and a Mescalero squaw than the wife of a coward and sneak."

He stood up and went nearer to her, shaking his finger in her face. He knew that he had lost, and he was reckless. "You had better marry me, or I will tell your birth from the housetops." But he was making the fatal mistake of dealing with the child that had been, instead of with the woman he had aroused.

She laughed at him — the first false laugh that had ever come from her lips. "You had better go now," she said, rising and standing with her arms at her side, and her head very erect.

He hesitated, opening his mouth to speak and shutting it again irresolutely.

"I told you to go," she repeated, raising her brows.

He took up his cap from the table, and went.

When Landor came in half an hour later he found her in her riding habit, sitting in front of the fire. She was still alone, and he felt instantly that there was more softness than ever before in the smile she gave him, more womanliness in the clinging of her hand. Altogether in her attitude and manner there was less of the restlessly youthful. He drew a chair beside hers, and settled back comfortably.

"Mr. Brewster has just been here," she said at length, and she played with the lash of her whip, avoiding his eyes, which was also a new way for her.

"I wish Brewster would not come so often," he said.

For answer she put out her hand and laid it upon his, not as she had often done it before, in the unattentive eagerness of some argument, but slowly, with a shadow of hesitation.

He was surprised, but he was pleased too, and he took the long fingers in his and held them gently.

"Do you still want me to marry you?" she asked him.

He told her that he most certainly did, and she went on.

"Is it because you think you ought to, or because you really want me?" She was looking at him steadily now, and he could not have lied to her. But the slender hand was warm and clinging, the voice low and sweet, the whole scene so cosey and domestic, and she

herself seemed so much more beautiful than ever, that he answered that it was because he wanted her — and for the moment it was quite true. Had so much as a blush come to her cheek, had she lowered her earnest gaze, had her voice trembled ever so little, it might have been true for all time. But she threw him back upon himself rudely, with an unfeminine lack of tact that was common with her. "Then I will marry you whenever you wish," she said.

"I began to tell you," she resumed directly, "that Mr. Brewster was here, and that he informed me that my mother was a squaw and my father a drunken private."

Landor jumped up from his chair. "Felipa!" he cried. At first he was more shocked and sorry for her than angry with Brewster.

"I don't mind," she began; and then her strict truthfulness coming uppermost, she corrected herself: "At least, I don't mind very much, not so much as you thought I would."

He strode up and down, his face black with rage, expressing his violent opinion of Brewster. Then he came to a stop, in front of her. "How did he happen to tell you?" he asked.

She explained. "He says he will tell it broadcast," she ended, "but he won't. It wouldn't be safe, and he knows it." Her cool self-possession had its effect on him. He studied her curiously and began to calm down.

She asked him about her father and mother. Going

back to his chair he told her everything that he knew, save only the manner of Cabot's death. "Then I took you to Yuma," he finished, "and from there to the East, via Panama." There was a pause. And then came the question he had most dreaded.

"Did my father leave me any money?" she asked.

There was nothing for it but to admit that from the day of her father's death she had been utterly Landor's dependant, — at a cost to him of how many pleasures, she, who knew the inadequacy of a lieutenant's pay, could easily guess.

She sat thinking, with her chin in her palm, and a quite new look of loneliness deep in her eyes. He could see that in the last hour she had grasped almost the fulness of her isolation — almost, but not all; only the years could bring forth the rest. She gave a heavy sigh. "Well, I am glad I love you," she said.

But he knew that she did not love him. She was grateful. It was sometimes an Apache trait. He realized that it was his curse and hers that he could not for an instant forget the strain. He read her character by it, half unconsciously. He saw it in her honesty, her sinewy grace, her features, her fearlessness, her kindness with children, — they were all Apache characteristics; and they were all repellent. From his youth on, he had associated the race with cruelty and every ghastly sight he had come upon, on the plains and in the mountains. It was a prejudice with more than the force of a heritage. He went on with his study of her, as she sat there. He was always studying her.

But he could not decide whether it was that she lacked sensitiveness and was really not greatly disturbed, or a savage sort of pride in concealing emotions.

He rose to his feet, shaking off an impatience with her and with himself. "Come," he said peremptorily; and they went out and mounted and rode away in the face of a whipping wind up the gradual slope to the mountains, black and weird beneath the heavy, low-hanging rain clouds.

Felipa had taught her horse to make its average gait a run, and she would have started it running now, but that Landor checked her. It was high time, he said, that he should teach her to ride. Now she was more than a little proud of her horsemanship, so she was annoyed as well as surprised.

But he went on, instructing her how it was not all of riding to stick on, and rather a question of saving and seat and the bit.

"You give your horse a sore back whenever you go far, and you always bring him back in a lather."

It was half because she felt it would prick him, and half in humility, that she answered, "I suppose that is the Indian in me."

His horse started. He had dug it with the rowels. Then he reined it in with a jerk that made it champ its curb. "Don't dwell on that all the time," he said angrily; "forget it." And then it flashed across him, the irreparable wrong he would be doing her if he taught her to consider the Apache blood a taint.

She gave him an odd, furtive glance and did not

answer for a time. He was never quite able to divine with her just how much of his thoughts she understood, and it put him at some disadvantage.

Presently she said: "I can't forget. And you can't. As for other people — they don't matter anyway." In her scheme of things other people rarely did matter. She hedged herself round with a barrier of indifference that was very nearly contempt, and encouraged no intimacies — not even with Landor. And he knew it.

She made it plainer to him by and by, as she went on to advise his course about Brewster. "If I were you, I would ignore his having told me, Jack. I ought to have pretended that I knew it, but I was taken by surprise. He must not think you resent it as though it were an insult, though. As for me, I won't have anything more to do with him; but that is for reasons of my own."

He demanded that he be told the reasons, but she refused very sweetly and very decidedly. And he was forced to accept the footing upon which she placed him, for all time.

* * * * * * * *

It was quite in keeping with everything that had gone before that, the day after a passing Franciscan priest had married them, Landor should have been ordered off upon a scout, and Felipa should have taken it as a matter of course, shedding no tears, and showing no especial emotion beyond a decent regret.

They had not gone upon a wedding trip for the excellent reason that there was no place to go; and as

they sat at dinner together in their sparsely furnished quarters, there was a timid ring at the door-bell, and Landor's Chinaman, the cook of his bachelor days, ushered in the commanding officer, who looked humble apology for the awkwardness of a visit he could not delay. He went straight to the matter in hand, in spite of the tactful intentions that had made him come himself instead of sending a subordinate.

"I say, Landor," he began, after having outwardly greeted Felipa and inwardly cursed his luck at being obliged to tear a man away from so fair a bride, "I say, there's been the dickens of a row up at the Agency."

Landor went on with his dinner coolly enough. "There's quite likely to be that at any time," he said, "so long as a pious and humane Indian Bureau sends out special agents of the devil who burn down the Agency buildings of peaceful Apaches as a means of inducing them to seek illness and death in malarious river bottoms."

"That," objected the major, testily, "is ancient history. This trouble started the way of most of the troubles of this age — whiskey." In his agitation he carefully spilled a spoonful of salt on the cloth and scraped it into a little mound with a knife. Then recollecting that spilled salt causes quarrels, he hurriedly threw a pinch of it over his left shoulder. "And — and, the worst of the whole business is, old man, that you've got to go. Your troop and one from Apache are ordered out. I'm awfully sorry." He would not look at Felipa at all. But he stared Landor

fairly out of countenance, as he waited for a storm of tears and protestations.

When, therefore, Mrs. Landor said, with the utmost composure, that it was too bad, his gasp was audible.

The captain knitted his thick brows and interposed quickly, talking against time. "If the Tucson ring and the Indian Bureau had one head, I should like the detail of cutting it off." His annoyance seemed to be of an impersonal sort, and the commandant began to feel that he must have handled the thing rather well, after all. He gained in self-esteem and equanimity.

Felipa rose from the table, and going over to her husband laid her hand on his shoulder. She asked when he must go. "To-night, my dear lady, I am afraid," soothed the commandant. But she appeared to be in no need of humoring, as she turned to Landor and offered to do what she might to help him.

He had dreaded a scene, but he was not so sure that this was not worse. "You are the wife for a soldier," he said somewhat feebly; "no tears and fuss and — all that kind of thing."

Landor winced as he folded his napkin and stood up. "I am ready," he said, and going into the long hallway took his cap from the rack and went with the major out into the night.

In half an hour he was back, and having produced his scouting togs from the depths of a sky-blue chest, smelling horribly of tobacco and camphor, he fell to dressing.

Felipa sat on the edge of the bunk and talked to

him, a little excited, and very anxious to try what a scout was like for herself.

As he put on his faded blouse he went and stood before her, holding out his arms. She moved over to him and laid her head on his shoulder. "Are you not sorry to have me go?" he asked, in the tones of one having a grievance. He felt that he was entitled to something of the sort.

Of course she was sorry, she protested, a little indignant that he should ask it. She would be horribly lonesome.

He tried hard to warm her to something more personal. "I might never come back, you know, dear." He realized that he was absolutely begging for affection, most futile and unavailing of all wastes of energy.

But she only answered that that was unlikely and slipped her arm around his neck, as she added that if anything were to happen to him, she would not have one real friend in the world. There was something pathetic in the quiet realization of her loneliness.

He stroked her hair pityingly. After all, she was only a half-savage creature bound to him by the ties of gratitude. He had seen the same thing in a Chiricahua girl baby he had once rescued, horribly burned, from the fire of an abandoned Indian camp, where she had been thrown by the fleeing hostiles, because she was sickly and hampered their progress. The hideous, scarred little thing had attached herself to him like a dog, and had very nearly pined herself to death when he had had to leave her for good. Afterward she had

married — at the ripe age of twelve — a buck of her own tribe. He thought of how she also had slipped her hard, seamed arm around his neck, and he drew away from Felipa.

When, in the darkness of a cloudy night, he said good-by to her on the road before his quarters, bending to kiss the warm mouth he could not see, he knew that it would have been possible for him to have loved her, had she been nearly all that she was not.

Then he mounted the horse the orderly held for him, and trotted off.

V

The Gila River cutting straight across the southern portion of Arizona, from the Alkali flats on the east to the Colorado at Yuma on the west, flowed then its whole course through desolation. Sometimes cottonwoods and sycamore trees rose in the bottom, and there was a patch of green around some irrigated land. But, for the most part, the basin was a waste of glittering sand and white dust, and beyond, the low hills, bare of every plant save a few stunted wild flowers, cacti and sage, greasewood and mesquite, rolled for miles and miles of barrenness. The chicken hawk and crow sailed through the fiercely blue sky, the air waved and quivered with incredible heat. At night malaria rose from the ground, the coyote barked and whined at the light of the brilliant stars, and the polecat prowled deliberately.

Here, toward the eastern part of the territory, the government had portioned off the San Carlos Agency for its Apache wards, and some thirty miles away, not far from the banks of the river, Camp Thomas for its faithful soldiery.

On a day when the mercury registered 120 degrees, Felipa Landor drove into the camp. Her life, since her marriage three years before, had been the usual nomadic

one of the place and circumstances, rarely so much as a twelvemonth in one place, never certain for one day where the next would find her. Recently Landor had been stationed at the headquarters of the Department of Arizona. But Felipa had made no complaint whatever at having to leave the gayest post in the territories for the most God-forsaken, and she refused flatly to go East. "I can stand anything that you can," she told her husband when he suggested it, which was apparently true enough, for now, in a heat that was playing out the very mules, covered as she was with powdery, irritating dust, she was quite cheerful as he helped her from the ambulance.

She stood looking round the post, across the white-hot parade ground, to the adobe barracks and the sutler's store. Then she turned and considered the officers' quarters. They were a row of hospital, wall, and A tents, floored with rough boards and sheltered by ramadas of willow branches.

In the middle of the line there was a one-room mud hut. This, with the tents back of it, was her home. Landor had fitted up the hut with Navajo blankets, Indian baskets, dolls, saddle bags, war bonnets, and quivers; with stuffed birds and framed chromos, camp-chairs and some rough quartermaster's furniture. A gray blanket, with a yellow Q. M. D. in the centre, kept the glare out at the window, and the room was cool enough. One advantage of adobe — and it has others — is that it retains all summer the winter cold, and all winter the summer heat.

Felipa expressed decided approval, and set to work making herself comfortable at once. Within ten minutes she had changed her travelling things for a white wrapper, had brushed the dust from her hair, and left it hanging straight and coarse and dead black, below her waist, — she was given to loosing it whenever the smallest excuse offered, — and had settled herself to rest in a canvas lounging chair.

Landor had come to agree with the major at Grant, that she was an excellent wife for a soldier. Her tastes were simple as those of a hermit. She asked only a tent and a bunk and enough to eat, and she could do without even those if occasion arose. She saw the best of everything, not with the exasperating optimism which insists upon smiling idiotically on the pleasant and the distinctly disagreeable alike, and upon being aggressively delighted over the most annoying mishaps, but with a quiet, common-sense intention of making the objectionable no more so for her own part. There were wives who made their husbands' quarters more dainty and attractive, if not more neat; but in the struggle — for it was necessarily a struggle — lost much peace of mind and real comfort. Upon the whole, Landor was very well satisfied, and Felipa was entirely so. She was utterly indifferent to being set down at a three-company post, where her only companion was to be a woman she disliked from the first, openly and without policy, as was her way.

The woman called early in the blazing afternoon, appearing clad in silks, waving a gorgeous fan of

plumes, and sinking languidly into a chair. Felipa sat bolt upright on a camp-stool, and before the close of an hour they were at daggers' points. The commandant's wife used cheap French phrases in every other breath, and Felipa retaliated in the end by a long, glib sentence, which was not understood. She seemed absolutely dense and unsmiling about it, but Landor was used to the mask of stolidity. He got up and went to the window to arrange the gray blanket, and hide a smile that came, even though he was perfectly aware of the unwisdom of making an enemy of the C. O.'s wife.

From thenceforth the elegant creature troubled Felipa as little as the nature of things would permit. She said that Mrs. Landor was *une sauvage* and so *brune;* and Mrs. Landor said she was a fool and dyed her hair. She was not given to mincing words. And she had small patience with a woman who lay in bed until the sun was high, and who spent her days lounging under the ramada, displaying tiny, satin-shod feet for the benefit of the enlisted men and the Indians who wandered over from the reservation.

She herself was up before dawn, riding over the hills with her husband, watching the sun rise above the blue mountains on the far-away horizon, and strike with lights of gold and rose the sands and the clumps of sage, visiting the herd where it struggled to graze, under well-armed guard, and gathering the pitiful wild flowers from the baked, lifeless soil. She shot quail and owls, and dressed their skins. She could endure

any amount of fatigue, and she could endure quite as well long stretches of idleness.

Having no children of her own, she took for protégé a small White Mountain, son of a buck who hung about the post most of the time, bought him candy and peanuts at the sutler's store, taught him English, and gathered snatches of his tribe's tongue in return.

Landor humored her, but did not quite approve. "If you begin that, every papoose at the Agency will be brought down to us," he suggested; and once when he had grown a little tired of having the noiseless, naked little savage forever round, he offered him a piece of canned lobster. Whereupon the boy fled wildly, and would not be coaxed back for many days. Felipa seemed really to miss him, so Landor never teased him after that, making only the reasonable request that the youngster be not allowed to scratch his head near him.

Another of her pets was a little fawn a soldier had caught and given to her. It followed her tamely about the post.

One morning, shortly before dinner call, she sat under the ramada, the deer at her feet, asleep, the little Apache squatted beside her, amusing himself with a collection of gorgeous pictorial labels, soaked from commissary fruit and vegetable cans. The camp was absolutely silent, even the drowsy scraping of the brooms of the police party having stopped some time before. Landor was asleep in his tent, and presently she herself began to doze. She was awakened by the sound of footsteps on the gravel in front of the

ramada, and in another moment a tall figure stood in the opening, dark against the glare. Instantly she knew it was the man with whom she had come face to face long before on the parade ground at Grant, though from then until now she had not thought of him once, nor remembered his existence.

She rose to her feet, standing slender and erect, the roused fawn on one side and the naked savage on the other. And they faced each other, disconcerted, caught mute in the reverberation, indefinite, quivering, of a chord which had been struck somewhere in the depths of that Nature to which we are willing enough to grant the power of causing the string of an instrument to pulse to the singing of its own note, but whose laws of sympathetic vibration we would fain deny beyond material things.

The man understood, and was dismayed. It is appalling to feel one's self snatched from the shifting foothold of individuality and whirled on in the current of the Force of Things. Felipa did not understand. And she was annoyed. She crashed in with the discord of a deliberate commonplace, and asked what she could do for him, speaking as to an inferior; and he, with a stiff resentment, answered that he wished to see Captain Landor.

She did not return to the ramada, but before long her husband came in search of her.

"That man is going to stay to luncheon," he told her.

She echoed "To luncheon!" in amazement. "But, Jack, he was a soldier, wasn't he?"

"He was, but he isn't. I sent for him about some business, and he is a very decent sort of a fellow. He has a little ranch on the reservation."

"A squaw-man?" she asked.

"I dare say," he answered carelessly. "Come and meet him. You'll like him."

She went, with none too good a grace.

Cairness said to himself that she was regal, and acknowledged her most formal welcome with an ease he had fancied among the arts he had long since lost.

"I have seen you before, Mrs. Landor," he said after a while.

"Yes?" she answered, and stroked the head of the fawn.

"Yes," he persisted, refusing to be thwarted, "once when you were crossing the parade at Grant, at retreat, and two days afterward when you shot a blue jay down by the creek."

She could not help looking at him now, and his eyes held hers through a silence that seemed to them so enduring, so unreasonable, that Landor must wonder at it. But he had seen men put at a disadvantage by her beauty before, and he had grown too used to her lack of conventionality to think much about it, one way or the other.

"Can't we send the hostile away?" he suggested, glancing at the small Apache, who was digging viciously at his head and watching Cairness with beady orbs. Felipa spoke to him, and he went.

"Do you like his kind?" the Englishman asked curiously.

"They have their good points," she answered, exactly as he himself had answered Brewster's baiting long ago. Then she fastened her gaze on the roof of the ramada.

It was evident that she had no intention of making herself agreeable. Landor had learned the inadvisability and the futility of trying to change her moods. She was as unaffected about them as a child. So he took up the conversation he and Cairness had left off, concerning the Indian situation, always a reliable topic. It was bad that year and had been growing steadily worse, since the trouble at the time of his marriage, when Arizona politicians had, for reasons related to their own pockets, brought about the moving of the White Mountain band to the San Carlos Agency. The White Mountains had been peaceable for years, and, if not friendly to the government, at least too wise to oppose it. They had cultivated land and were living on it inoffensively. But they were trading across the territorial line into New Mexico, and that lost money to Arizona. So they were persuaded by such gentle methods as the burning of their Agency buildings and the destruction of their property, to move down to San Carlos. The climate there was of a sort fatal to the mountain Apaches, — the thing had been tried before with all the result that could be desired, in the way of fevers, ague, and blindness, — and also the White Mountains were hereditary enemies of the San Carlos tribes. But a government with a policy, three thousand miles away, did not know these things, nor yet seek to know them. Government is like the gods, upon occasions: it

first makes mad, then destroys. And if it is given time enough, it can be very thorough in both.

In the period of madness, more or less enduring, of the victim of the Great Powers' policy, somebody who is innocent usually suffers. Sometimes the Powers know it, oftener they do not. Either way it does not worry them. They set about doing their best to destroy, and that is their whole duty.

Not having had enough of driving to madness in '75 and '76, they tried it again three years later. They were dealing this time with other material, not the friendly and the cowed, but with savages as cruel and fierce and unscrupulous as those of the days of Coronado. Victorio, Juh, and Geronimo were already a little known, but now they were to have their names shrieked to the unhearing heavens in the agony of the tortured and the dying.

The Powers said that a party of Indians had killed two American citizens, and had thereby offended against their sacred laws. To be sure the Americans had sold the Indians poisonous whiskey, so they had broken the laws, too. But there is, as any one should be able to see, a difference between a law-breaking Chiricahua and a law-breaking territorial politician. Cairness refused to see it. He said things that would have been seditious, if he had been of any importance in the scheme of things. As it was, the Great Powers did not heed them, preferring to take advice from men who did not know an Apache from a Sioux — or either from the creation of the shilling shocker.

"I am not wasting any sympathy on the Apaches, nor on the Indians as a whole. They have got to perish. It is in the law of advancement that they should. But where is the use in making the process painful? Leave them alone, and they'll die out. It isn't three hundred years since one of the biggest continents of the globe was peopled with them, and now there is the merest handful left, less as a result of war and slaughter than of natural causes. Nature would see to it that they died, if we didn't."

"The philanthropist doesn't look at it that way. He thinks that we should strive to preserve the species."

"I don't," Cairness differed; "it's unreasonable. There is too much sympathy expended on races that are undergoing the process of extinction. They have outgrown their usefulness, if they ever had any. It might do to keep a few in a park in the interests of science, and of that class of people which enjoys seeing animals in cages. But as for making citizens of the Indians, raising them to our level—it can't be done. Even when they mix races, the red strain corrupts the white."

Landor glanced at his wife. She seemed to take it without offence, and was listening intently.

"It's the old saying about a dog walking on its hind legs, when you come to civilizing the Indian. You are surprised that he civilizes at all, but he doesn't do it well, for all that. He can be galvanized into a temporary semblance of national life, but he is dead at the core, and he will decay before long."

"They could kill a good many of us before they died out, if we would sit still and take it," Landor objected.

"It's six one, and half a dozen the other. They'd be willing enough to die out in peace, if we'd let them. Even they have come to have a vague sort of instinct that that's what it amounts to."

Landor interrupted by taking the slipper from Felipa's foot and killing with it a centipede that crawled up the wall of the abode. "That's the second," he said, as he put the shoe on again. "I killed one yesterday; the third will come to-morrow." Then he went back to his chair and to the discussion, and before long he was called to the adjutant's office.

Felipa forgot her contempt for Cairness. She was interested and suddenly aroused herself to show it. "How do you come to be living with the Indians?" she asked. It was rarely her way to arrive at a question indirectly. "Have you married a squaw?"

He flushed angrily, then thought better of it, because after all the question was not impertinent. So he only answered with short severity that he most certainly had not.

Felipa could not help the light of relief that came on her face, but realizing it, she was confused.

He helped her out. "I have drifted in a way," he went on to explain. "I left home when I was a mere boy, and the spirit of savagery and unrest laid hold of me. I can't break away. And I'm not even sure that I want to. You, I dare say, can't understand." Yet he felt so sure, for some reason, that she could that he

merely nodded his head when she said briefly, "I can."
"Then, too," he went on, "there is something in the Indian character that strikes a responsive chord in me. I come of lawless stock myself. I was born in Sidney." Then he stopped short. What business was it of hers where he had been born? He had never seen fit to speak of it before. Nevertheless he intended that she should understand now. So he made it quite plain. "Sidney was a convict settlement, you know," he said deliberately, "and marriages were promiscuous. My grandfather was an officer who was best away from England. My grandmother poisoned her first husband. That is on my mother's side. On my father's side it was about as mixed." He leaned back, crossing his booted legs and running his fingers into his cartridge belt. His manner asked with a certain defiance, what she was going to do about it, or to think.

And what she did was to say, with a deliberation equal to his own, that her mother had been a half-breed Mescalero and her father a private.

He looked at her steadily, in silence. It did not seem that there was anything to say. He would have liked to tell her how beautiful she was. But he did not do it. Instead, he did much worse. For he took a beaded and fringed leather case from his pocket and held out to her the drawing he had made of her four years before. She gave it back without a word, and bent to play with the buckskin collar on the neck of the fawn.

Cairness put the sketch back in the case and stood

up. "Will you tell Captain Landor that I found that I could not wait, after all?" he said, and bowing went out from the ramada.

She sat staring at the white glare of the opening, and listening to his foot-falls upon the sand.

VI

Landor said that he had put in a requisition for kippered mackerel and anchovy paste, and that the commissary was running down so that one got nothing fit to eat. He was in an unpleasant frame of mind, and his first lieutenant, who messed with him, pulled apart a broiled quail that lay, brown and juicy, on its couch of toast and cress, and asked wherein lay the use of taking thought of what you should eat. "Every prospect is vile, and man is worse, and the sooner heaven sends release the better. What is there in a life like this? Six weeks from the nearest approach to civilization, malaria in the air by night and fire by day. Even Mrs. Landor is showing it."

"I didn't know that I had made any complaint," she said equably.

"You haven't, but the summer has told on you just the same. You are thin, and your eyes are too big. Look at that!" He held out a hand that shook visibly. "That's the Gila Valley for you."

"Sometimes it's the Gila Valley, and sometimes it's rum," said Landor. "It's rum with a good many."

"Why shouldn't it be? What the deuce has a fellow got to do but drink and gamble? You have to, to keep your mind off it."

The lieutenant himself did neither, but he argued that his mind was never off it.

Felipa thought it was not quite so bad as that, and she poured herself another cup of the Rio, strong as lye, with which she saturated her system, to keep off the fever.

"You might marry," Landor suggested. "You can always do that when all else fails."

"Who is there to marry hereabouts? And always supposing there were some one, I'd be sent off on a scout next day, and have to ship her back East for an indefinite time. It would be just my blamed luck."

The breakfast humor when the thermometer has been a hundred and fifteen in the shade for long months, is pessimistic. "Don't get married then, please," said Felipa, "not for a few days at any rate. I don't want Captain Landor to go off until he gets over these chills and things."

There was a knock at the door of the tent, and it opened. The adjutant came in. "I say, Landor —"

"I say, old man, shut that door! Look at the flies. Now go on," he added, as the door banged; and he rose to draw a chair to the table.

"Can't stay," said the adjutant, all breathless. "The line's down between here and the Agency; but a runner has just come in, and there's trouble. The bucks are restless. Want to join Victorio in New Mexico. You've both got to get right over there."

It was the always expected, the never ceasing. Landor looked at his wife and stroked his mustache with

a shaking hand. His face was yellow, and his hair had grown noticeably grayer.

"You are not fit to go," Felipa said resignedly, "but that doesn't matter, of course."

"No," he agreed, "it doesn't matter. And I shall do well enough." Then the three went out, and she finished her breakfast alone.

In less than an hour the troop was ready, the men flannel-shirted and gauntleted, their soft felt hats pulled over their eyes, standing reins in hand, foot in stirrup, beside the fine, big horses that Crook had substituted for the broncos of the plains cavalry of former years. Down by the corrals the pack-mules were ready, too, grunting under their aparejos and packs. A thick, hot wind, fraught with sand, was beginning, presaging one of the fearful dust storms of the southwest. The air dried the very blood in the veins. The flies, sticky and insistent, clung and buzzed about the horses' eyes and nostrils. Bunches of tumbleweed and hay went whirling across the parade.

Landor came trotting over from his quarters, followed by his orderly, and the troops moved off across the flat, toward the river.

Felipa stood leaning listlessly against the post of the ramada, watching them. After a time she went into the adobe and came out with a pair of field-glasses, following the course of the command as it wound along among the foot-hills. The day dragged dully along. She was uneasy about her husband, her nerves were shaken with the coffee and quinine, and she was filled,

moreover, with a vague restlessness. She would have sent for her horse and gone out even in the clouds of dust and the wind like a hot oven, but Landor had forbidden her to leave the post. Death in the tip of a poisoned arrow, at the point of a yucca lance, or from a more merciful bullet of lead, might lurk behind any mesquite bush or gray rock.

She set about cleaning the little revolver, self-cocking, with the thumb-piece of the hammer filed away, that her husband had given her before they were married. To-night she wanted no dinner. She was given to eating irregularly; a good deal at a time, and again nothing for a long stretch. That, too, was in the blood. So she sent the soldier cook away, and he went over to the deserted barracks.

Then she tried to read, but the whisper of savagery was in the loneliness and the night. She sat with the book open in her lap, staring into a shadowy corner where there leaned an Indian lance, surmounted by a war bonnet. Presently she stood up, and stretched her limbs slowly, as a beast of prey does when it shakes off the lethargy of the day and wakens for the darkness. Then she went out to the back of the tents.

The stars were bright chips of fire in a sky of polished blue. The wind of the day had died at dusk, and the silence was deep, but up among the bare graves the coyotes were barking weirdly. As she looked off across the low hills, there was a quick, hissing rattle at her feet. She moved hastily, but without a start, and glanced down at a rattler not three feet away.

Landor's sabre stood just within the sitting room, and she went for it and held the glittering blade in front of the snake. Its fangs struck out viciously again and again, and a long fine stream of venom trickled along the steel. Then she raised the sabre and brought it down in one unerring sweep, severing the head from the body. In the morning she would cut off the rattle and add it to the string of close upon fifty that hung over her mirror. But now the night was calling to her, the wild blood was pricking in her veins. Running the sabre into the ground, she cleaned off the venom, and went back to the adobe to put it in its scabbard.

After she had done that she stood hesitating for just a moment before she threw off all restraint with a toss of her head, and strapped about her waist a leather belt from which there hung a bowie knife and her pistol in its holster. Then slipping on her moccasins, she glided into the darkness. She took the way in the rear of the quarters, skirting the post and making with swift, soundless tread for the river. Her eyes gleamed from under her straight, black brows as she peered about her in quick, darting glances.

Not a week before — and then the Agency had been officially at peace — a Mexican packer had been shot down by an arrow from some unseen bow, within a thousand yards of the post, in broad daylight. The Indians, caking their bodies with clay, and binding sage or grass upon their heads, could writhe unseen almost within arm's reach. But Felipa was not afraid. Straight for the river bottom she made, passing amid the dump-

heaps, where a fire of brush was still smouldering, filling the air with pungent smoke, where old cans and bottles shone in the starlight, and two polecats, pretty white and black little creatures, their bushy tails erect, sniffed with their sharp noses as they walked stupidly along. Their bite meant hydrophobia, but though one came blindly toward her, she barely moved aside. Her skirt brushed it, and it made a low, whining, mean sound.

Down by the river a coyote scudded across her path as she made her way through the willows, and when he was well beyond, rose up on his hind legs and looked after her. At the water's edge she stopped and glanced across to the opposite bank. The restlessness was going, and she meant to return now, before she should be missed — if indeed she were not missed already, as was very probable. Yet still she waited, her hands clasped in front of her, looking down at the stream. Farther out, in the middle, a ripple flashed. But where she stood among the bushes, it was very dark. The water made no sound, there was not a breath of air, yet suddenly there was a murmur, a rustle.

Felipa's revolver was in her hand, and cocked and pointed straight between two eyes that shone out of the blackness. And so, for an appreciable time, she stood. Then a long arm came feeling out; but because she was looking along the sight into the face at the very end of the muzzle, she failed to see it. When it closed fast about her waist, she gave a quick gasp and fired. But the bullet, instead of going straight through the forehead beneath the head

band, as she had meant it to do, ploughed down. The grasp on the body relaxed for an instant; the next it had tightened, and a branch had struck the pistol from her hand.

And now it was a struggle of sheer force and agility. She managed to whip out the knife from her belt and to strike time and time again through sinewy flesh, to the bone. The only noise was the dragging of their feet on the sand, the cracking of the willows and the swishing of the blade. It was savage against savage, two vicious, fearless beasts.

The Apache in Felipa was full awake now, awake in the bliss of killing, the frenzy of fight, and awake too, in the instinct which told her how, with a deep-drawn breath, a contraction, a sudden drop and writhing, she would be free of the arms of steel. And she was free, but not to turn and run — to lunge forward, once and again, her breath hissing between her clenched, bared teeth.

The buck fell back before her fury, but she followed him thrusting and slashing. Yet it might not, even then, have ended well for her, had there not come from somewhere overhead the sound most dreaded as an omen of harm by all Apaches — the hoot of an owl. The Indian gave a low cry of dismay and turned and darted in among the bushes.

She stood alone, with the sticky, wet knife in her hand, catching her breath, coming out of the madness. Then she stooped, and pushing the branches aside felt about for her pistol. It lay at the root of a tree, and

when she had picked it up and put it back in the holster, there occurred to her for the first time the thought that the shot in the dead stillness must have roused the camp. And now she was sincerely frightened. If she were found here, it would be more than disagreeable for Landor. They must not find her. She started at a swift, long-limbed run, making a wide detour, to avoid the sentries, bending low, and flying silently among the bushes and across the shadowy sands.

She could hear voices confusedly, men hurriedly calling and hallooing as she neared the back of the officers' line and crept into her tent. The door was barely closed when there came a knock, and the voice of the striker asking if she had heard the shot across the river.

"Yes," she said, "I heard it. But I was not frightened. What was it?" He did not know, he said, and she sent him back to the barracks.

Then she lit a lamp and took off her blood-stained gown. There was blood, too, on the knife and its case. She cleaned them as best she could and looked into the chamber of her revolver with a contemplative smile on the lips that less than half an hour before had been curled back from her sharp teeth like those of a fighting wolf. She wondered how badly the buck had been hurt.

And the next day she knew. When she came out in front of her quarters in the morning, rather later than usual, there was a new tent beside the hospital,

and when she asked the reason for it, they told her that a wounded Apache had been found down by the river soon after the shot had been fired the night before. He was badly hurt, with a ball in his shoulder, and he was half drunk with tizwin, as well as being cut in a dozen places.

She listened attentively to the account of the traces of a struggle among the willows, and asked who had fired the shot. It was not known, they said, and the sullen buck would probably never tell.

When she saw the post surgeon come out from his house and start over to the hospital, she called to him. "May I see your new patient?" she asked.

He told her that he was going to operate at once, to remove the ball and the shattered bone, but that she might come if she wished. His disapproval was marked, but she went with him, nevertheless, and sat watching while he picked and probed at the wound.

The Apache never quivered a muscle nor uttered a sound. It was fine stoicism, and appealed to Felipa until she really felt sorry for him.

But presently she stood up to go away, and her eyes caught the lowering, glazed ones of the Indian. Half involuntarily she made a motion of striking with a knife. Neither the doctor nor the steward caught it, but he did, and showed by a sudden start that he understood.

He watched her as she went out of the tent, and the surgeon and steward worked with the shining little instruments.

VII

Landor came in a few weeks later. He had had an indecisive skirmish in New Mexico with certain bucks who had incurred the displeasure of the paternal government by killing and eating their horses, to the glory of their gods and ancestors, and thereafter working off their enthusiasm by a few excursions beyond the confines of the reservation, with intent to murder and destroy.

Being shaved of the thick iron-gray beard, and once again in seemly uniform, and having reported to the commandant, he sat down to talk with his wife.

She herself lay at full length upon a couch she had devised out of packing cases. It occurred to Landor that she often dropped down to rest now, and that she was sallow and uneasy.

He looked at her uncomfortably. "I am going to get you out of this, up into the mountains somewhere," he said abruptly; "you look peaked."

She did not show the enthusiasm he had rather expected. "I dare say it is my bad conscience," she answered with some indifference. "I have a sin to confess."

He naturally did not foresee anything serious, and he only said, "Well?" and began to fill his pipe from a

buckskin pouch, cleverly sketched in inks with Indian scenes. "By the way," he interrupted as she started to speak, "what do you think of this?" He held it out to her. "That fellow Cairness, who wouldn't stay to luncheon that day, did it for me. We camped near his place a couple of days. And he sent you a needle-case, or some such concern. It's in my kit." She looked at the pouch carefully before she gave it back; then she clasped her hands under her head again and gazed up at the manta of the ceiling, which sagged and was stained where the last cloud-burst had leaked through the roof.

"Well?" repeated Landor.

"I disobeyed orders," said Felipa.

"Did you, though?"

"And I went outside the post the night after you left, down to the river. Some one will probably tell you about a wounded Sierra Blanca found down among the bushes in the river bottom that same night. I shot him, and then I hacked him up with my knife." He had taken his pipe from his mouth and was looking at her incredulously, perplexed. He did not understand whether it was a joke on her part, or exactly what it was.

But she sat up suddenly, with one of her quick movements of conscious strength and perfect control over every muscle, clasped her hands about her knees, and went on. "It was very curious," and there came on her face the watchful, alert, wild look, with the narrowing of the eyes. "It was very curious, I could not

have stayed indoors that night if it had cost me my life — and it very nearly did, too. I had to get out. So I took my revolver and my knife, and I went the back way, down to the river. While I was standing on the bank and thinking about going home, an Indian stole out on me. I had an awful struggle. First I shot. I aimed at his forehead, but the bullet struck his shoulder ; and then I fought with the knife. As soon as I could slip out of his grasp, I went at him and drove him off. But I didn't know how badly he was hurt until the next day. The shot had roused them up here, and they went down to the river and found him bleeding on the sand.

"They put him in a tent beside the hospital, and the next morning I went over with the doctor to see him. He was all cut up on the arms and neck and shoulders. I must have been very strong." She stopped, and he still sat with the puzzled look on his face, but a light of understanding beginning to show through.

"Are you joking," he asked, "or what ?"

"Indeed, I am not joking," she assured him earnestly. "It is quite true. Ask any one. Only don't let them know it was I who wounded him. They have never so much as suspected it. Fortunately I thought of you and ran home all the way, and was in my tent before it occurred to any one to come for me." She burst into a low laugh at his countenance of wrath and dismay. "Oh ! come, Jack dear, it is not so perfectly, unspeakably horrible after all. I was disobedient. But then I am so sorry and promise never, never to do it again."

"You might have killed the Indian," he said, in a strained voice. It did not occur to either of them, just then, that it was not the danger she had been in that appalled him.

She was astonished in her turn. "Killed him! Why, of course I might have killed him," she said blankly, frowning, in a kind of hopeless perplexity over his want of understanding. "I came very near it, I tell you. The ball made shivers of his shoulder. But he was brave," she grew enthusiastic now, "he let the doctor probe and pick, and never moved a muscle. Of course he was half drunk with tizwin, even then."

"You didn't stay to see the operation?" His voice was ominously quiet.

"For a while, yes. And before I came away I made a sign to show him it was I. You should have seen his surprise."

There followed a fury-fraught silence. Landor's face was distorted with the effort he was making to contain himself, and Felipa began to be a little uneasy. So she did the most unwise thing possible, having been deprived by nature of the good gift of tact. She got up from the couch and drew the knife from its case, and took it to him. "That," she said, showing the red-brown stains on the handle, "that is his blood."

He snatched it from her then, with a force that threw her to one side, and sent it flying across the room, smashing a water jug to bits. Then he pushed her away and going out, banged the door until the whitewash fell down from the cracks.

Felipa was very thoroughly frightened now. She stood in wholesome awe of her husband, and it was the first time she had ever made him really angry, although frequently he was vaguely irritated by her. She had had no idea the thing would infuriate him so, or she would probably have kept it to herself. And she wished now that she had, as she went back to the couch and sat on the edge of it, dejectedly.

When he returned at the end of a couple of hours she was all humility, and she had moreover done something that was rare for her: made capital of her beauty, putting on her most becoming white gown, and piling her hair loosely on the top of her head, with a cap of lace and a ribbon atop of it. Landor liked the little morning caps, probably because they were a sort of badge of civilization, but they were incongruous for all that, and took from the character of her head. His anger was well in leash, and he gave her the mail which had just come in by the stage, quite as though nothing had occurred. "And now," he commenced, when he had glanced over the Eastern papers, "I have seen the C. O.; he wants the line between here and Apache fixed. He will give me the detail if you care to go." He plainly meant to make no further reference to her confession, but she would have been more than woman if she had known when to let a matter drop.

Her face lighted with the relief of a forgiven child, and she went to him and put her arms around his neck.

"You are so good to me," she said penitently, "and I was so disobedient."

He bit his lip and did not reply, either to the words or to the caress. "You need a month of the mountains, I think," he said.

The telegraph between Thomas and Apache always gave something to think about. The Indians had learned the use of the White-eye's talking wire very promptly. In the early '70's, when it first came to their notice, they put it to good use. As when an Apache chief sent to a Yuma chief the message that if the Yumas did not hold to a certain promise, the Apaches would go on the war-path and destroy them, root and branch.

The Indians and the cow-boys used the insulators to try their marksmanship upon, and occasionally — in much the same spirit that the college man takes gates from their hinges and pulls down street signs — the young bucks cut the wires and tied the ends with rubber bands. Also trees blown down by storms fell crashing across the line, and some scheme for making it a little less tempting and a little more secure was much needed. Landor had long nursed such an one. So a week later he and Felipa, with a detail of twenty men and a six-mule wagon, started across the Gila Valley to the White Mountains.

By day Felipa was left in camp with the cook, while Landor and the men worked on ahead, returning at sundown. At times she went with them, but as a rule she wandered among the trees and rocks, shooting with pistol and bow, but always keeping close to the tents. She had no intention of disobeying her hus-

band again. Sometimes, too, she read, and sometimes cooked biscuits and game over the campfire in the Dutch oven. Her strength began to return almost from the first, and she had gone back, for comfort's sake, to the short skirts of her girlhood.

The Indians who came round talked with her amicably enough, mainly by signs. She played with the children too, and one day there appeared among them her protégé of the post, who thereafter became a camp follower.

And on another morning there lounged into the space in front of the tents, with the indolent swing of a mountain lion, a big Sierra Blanca buck. He was wrapped from neck to moccasins in a red blanket, and carried an elaborate calf's-hide quiver. He stopped in front of Felipa, who was sitting on the ground with her back against the trunk of a fallen tree reading, and held out the quiver to her.

"How," he said gruffly.

"How," answered Felipa, as unconcernedly as though she had not recognized him almost at once for the buck she had last seen in the A tent beside the hospital, with the doctor picking pieces of bone and flesh from his shoulder. Then she took the quiver and examined it. There was a bow as tall as herself, and pliable as fine steel, not a thing for children to play with, but a warrior's arm. Also there were a number of thin, smooth, gayly feathered arrows. "*Malas*," he told her, touching the heads. "*Venadas*," and she knew that he meant that they were poisoned by the process of dip-

ping them in putrid liver, into which a rattler had been made to inject its venom. Even then the sort was becoming rare, though the arrow was still in use as a weapon and not merely as an attraction for tourists.

The buck sat down upon the ground in front of Felipa and considered her. By the etiquette of the tribe she could not ask him his name, but the boy, her protégé, told her that it was Alchesay. All the afternoon he hung around the camp, taciturn, apparently aimless, while she went about her usual amusements and slept in the tent. Once in a way he spoke to her in Spanish. And for days thereafter, as they moved up along the rough and dangerous road, — where the wagon upset with monotonous regularity, big and heavy though it was, — he appeared from time to time.

For some days Felipa had noticed a change, indefinable and slight, yet still to be felt, in the manner of the Indians all about. Not that they were ever especially gracious, but now the mothers discouraged the children from playing hide-and-seek with her, and although there were quite as many squaws, fewer bucks came around than before. But Alchesay could always be relied upon to stalk in, at regular intervals, and seat himself near the fire, or the hot ashes thereof.

They had been four days camping on Black River, a mountain stream rushing between the steep hills, with the roar of a Niagara, hunting deer and small game, fishing with indifferent success, — to the disgust of the Apaches, who would much rather have eaten worms than fish, — and entertaining visitors. There were any

number of these. One party had come out from Fort Apache, another from a camp of troops on the New Mexico road, and some civilians from Boston, who were in search of a favorable route for a projected railway.

In the opinion of Landor, who knew the impracticable country foot for foot, they were well-intentioned lunatics. But they were agreeable guests, who exchanged the topics of the happy East for the wild turkey and commissary supplies of the Far West, and in departing took with them a picturesque, if inexact, notion of army life on the frontier, and left behind a large number of books for Felipa, who had dazzled their imaginations.

She had read one of the books one afternoon when she was left alone, until the sun began to sink behind the mountain tops, and the cook to drag branches to the fire preparatory to getting supper. Then she marked her place with a twig, and rose up from the ground to go to the tent and dress, against Landor's return. The squaws and bucks who had been all day wandering around the outskirts of the camp, speaking together in low voices, and watching the cook furtively, crowded about the opening.

She warned them off with a careless "*ukishee.*" But they did not go. Some ten pairs of eyes, full of unmistakable menace, followed her every movement. She let down the tent flaps and tied them together, taking her time about it. She was angry, and growing angrier. It was unendurable to her to be disobeyed, to have her authority put at naught on the few occasions when she chose to exercise it. She could keep her temper over

anything but that. And her temper was of the silent sort, rolling on and on, like a great cold swell at sea, to break finally against the first obstacle with an uncontrollable force. She had never been really angry but twice in her life. Once when she was in school, and when a teacher she liked, judging her by her frequent and unblushing lies to a teacher she disliked, doubted her word upon an occasion when she was really speaking the truth. It was after that that she had written to her guardian that she would run away. The second time had been when Brewster had tried to bully her. She knew that it would soon be a third time, if the Indians went on annoying her. And she was far more afraid of what she might do than of what they might do. But she took off the waist of her gown and began to brush her hair, not being in the least squeamish about letting the Apaches see her fine white arms and neck, if they were to open the flaps again.

Which was what they presently did. She expected it. A long, wrinkled hand reached in, feeling about for the knots of the tape. She stood still with the brush in her hands, watching. Another hand came, and another. She caught up her quirt from the cot, then realizing that the sting of the lash would only prove an exasperation and weaken her authority, if she had any whatever, — and she believed that she had, — she threw it down. The cook was probably in the kitchen tent and did not know what was going on. And she would have died before she would have called for help.

The lean hands found the knots, untied them, and threw back the flaps defiantly. The ten pairs of eyes were fastened on her again. She returned the gaze steadily, backing to a little camp table and slipping her hand under a newspaper that lay upon it. "*Ukishee, pronto*," she commanded, in the accepted argot. They stood quite still and unyielding; and she knew that if she were to be obeyed at all, it must be now. Or if she were to die, it must be now also. But the hand that drew from beneath the newspaper the little black-butted Smith and Wesson, which was never out of her reach, did not so much as tremble as she aimed it straight between the eyes of the foremost buck. "*Ukishee*," she said once again, not loudly, but without the shadow of hesitation or wavering. There answered a low muttering, evil and rising, and the buck started forward. Her finger pressed against the trigger, but before the hammer had snapped down, she threw up the barrel and fired into the air, for a big, sinewy arm, seamed with new scars, had reached out suddenly and struck the buck aside. It was all done in an instant, so quickly that Felipa hardly knew she had changed her aim, and that it was Alchesay who had come forward only just in time.

The cook came running, six-shooter in hand, but Alchesay was driving them away and lowering the canvas flaps. Felipa told the cook that it was all right, and went on with her dressing. Although she had no gifts for guessing the moods and humors of her father's race, she understood her mother's considerably better,

and so she did not even call a "*gracias*" after Alchesay. She merely nodded amicably when she went out and found him sitting on the ground waiting for her. He returned the nod, a degree less graciously, if possible, and began to talk to her in bad Spanish, evidently putting small faith in her command of the White Mountain idiom, marvellous, to be sure, in a White-eye squaw, for such were of even greater uselessness than the average woman, but of no account whatever in a crisis. And such he plainly considered this to be.

"*Usted, vaya prontisimo*," he directed with the assumption of right of one to whom she owed her life.

She looked down at him in a somewhat indignant surprise. "*Pues porque?*" she asked, maintaining the haughtiness of the dominant race, and refusing to acknowledge any indebtedness. "Why should I go away?"

"*Hombre!*" grunted the Indian, puffing at a straw-paper cigarette, "*excesivamente peligroso aqui.*"

"Why is it dangerous?" she wanted to know, and shrugged her shoulders. She was plainly not to be terrorized.

"*Matarán á Usted.*"

"They will kill me? Who will kill me, and what for?"

He gave another grunt. "Go away to-morrow. Go to the Fort." He pointed with the hand that held the bit of cigarette in the direction of Apache. "Tell your man."

She threw him an indifferent "I am not afraid, not of anything." It was a boast, but he had reason to know that it was one she could make good.

He rolled another cigarette, and sat smoking it unmoved. And she went into the mess tent.

Nevertheless she decided that it might be best to tell her husband, and she did so as they sat together by the fire after the moon had risen into the small stretch of sky above the mountain peaks. They had bought a live sheep that day from a Mexican herder who had passed along the road, and they were now cutting ribs from the carcass that hung from the branch of a near-by tree, and broiling them on the coals. Felipa finished an unimpassioned account of the afternoon's happenings and of Alchesay's advice, and Landor did not answer at once. He sat thinking. Of a sudden there was a rustle and a step among the pines, and from behind a big rock a figure came out into the half shadow. Felipa was on her feet with a spring, and Landor scrambled up almost as quickly.

The figure moved into the circle of red firelight and spoke, "It is Cairness."

Felipa started back so violently that she struck against the log she had been sitting upon, and lost her balance.

Cairness jumped forward, and his arm went around her, steadying her. For a short moment she leaned against his shoulder. Then she drew away, and her voice was quite steady as she greeted him. He could never have guessed that in that moment she had

learned the meaning of her life, that there had flashed burningly through her brain a wild, unreasoning desire to stand forever backed against that rock of strength, to defy the world and all its restrictions.

There was a bright I. D. blanket spread on the ground a little way back from the fire, and she threw herself down upon it. All that was picturesque in his memories of history flashed back to Cairness, as he took his place beside Landor on the log and looked at her. Boadicea might have sat so in the depths of the Icenean forests, in the light of the torches of the Druids. So the Babylonian queen might have rested in the midst of her victorious armies, or she of Palmyra, after the lion hunt in the deserts of Syria. Her eyes, red lighted beneath the shadowing lashes, met his. Then she glanced away into the blackness of the pine forest, and calling her dog to lie down beside her, stroked its silky red head.

"I knew," Cairness said, turning to Landor after a very short silence, "that you and Mrs. Landor were somewhere along here. So I left my horse at a rancheria across the hill there," he nodded over his shoulder in the direction of the looming pile just behind, "and walked to where I saw the fire. I saw you for some time before I was near, but I ought to have called out. I really didn't think about startling you."

"That's all right," Landor said; "are you hunting?"

He hesitated. "I have done some shooting. I am always shooting more or less, for that matter."

Landor went to the tree and cut another rib from

the mutton and threw it on the coals. Then he walked across the clearing to the tent.

Cairness and Felipa were alone, and he leaned nearer to her. "Do you know," he asked in a low voice, "that there have been all sorts of rumors of trouble among the Indians for some time?"

She nodded.

"I have kept near you for a week, to warn you, or to help you if necessary."

Her lips parted, and quivered, and closed again. The winds from the wide heavens above the gap whined through the pines, the river roared steadily down below, and the great, irresistible hand of Nature crushed without heeding it the thin, hollow shell of convention. The child of a savage and a black sheep looked straight and long into the face of the child of rovers and criminals. They were man and woman, and in the freemasonry of outlawry made no pretence.

"You know that I love you?" he said unevenly.

"I know it," she whispered, but she took her shaking hand from the dog's head, and, without another word, pointed to the shadow of Landor's figure, thrown distorted by the candle light against the side of the tent.

And he understood that the shadow must rise always between them. He had never expected it to be otherwise. It was bound to be so, and he bowed his head in unquestioning acceptance.

The shadow was swallowed up in darkness. The candle had been blown out, and Landor came back to the fire.

"You must get Mrs. Landor into the post to-morrow," Cairness said abruptly; "Victorio's band is about."

Landor asked him to spend the night at the camp, and he did so, being given a cot in the mess tent.

About an hour after midnight there came thundering through the quiet of the night the sound of galloping hoofs along the road at the foot of the ravine. Cairness, lying broad awake, was the first to hear it. He sprang up and ran to the opening of the tent. He guessed that it was a courier even before the gallop changed to a trot, and a voice called from the invisible depths below, "Captain Landor?" with a rising intonation of uncertainty.

"Yes," Cairness called back.

"Is that Captain Landor's camp?"

A score of voices answered "Yes." They were all aroused now. Landor went down to meet the man, who had dismounted and was climbing up toward him, leading his horse. It was a courier, sent out from Apache, as Cairness had supposed.

"Sixty of Victorio's hostiles have been at the Agency, and are on their way back to New Mexico. Will probably cross your camp," the captain read aloud to the men, who crowded as near as was compatible with discipline.

Then he went off to inspect the stock and the pickets, and to double the sentries. "You had better sleep on your arms," he told the soldiers, and returned to his cot to lie down upon it, dressed, but feigning sleep,

that Felipa might not be uneasy. He need not have resorted to deception. Felipa had not so much as pretended to close her eyes that night.

Before dawn Cairness was out, hastening the cook with the breakfast, helping with it himself, indeed, and rather enjoying the revival of the days when he had been one of the best cooks in the troop and forever pottering about the mess chests and the Dutch oven, in the field. As the sun rose, — though daybreak was fairly late there in the cañon, — the cold, crisp air was redolent of coffee and bacon and broiling fresh meat.

Felipa, lifting her long riding skirt, stepped out from the tent, and stood with hand upraised holding back the flap. A ray of sun, piercing white through the pines, fell full on her face. She had the look of some mysterious priestess of the sun god, and Cairness, standing by the crackling fire, prodding it with a long, charred stick, watched her without a word.

Then she came forward, holding out her hand in the most matter-of-fact way, if, indeed, any action of a very beautiful woman can be matter of fact.

"I shall ride into Apache with you in Captain Landor's stead, if he will allow me," he told her, and added, "and if you will."

She bowed gravely, "You are very kind."

At the instant a cloud floated over the sun, and soon a black bank began to fill up the sky above the cañon. As they ate their breakfast in the tent, the morning darkened forebodingly. Felipa finished the big quart cup of weak coffee hurriedly, and stood up, pushing

back her camp-stool. Her horse and four others were waiting.

Landor had agreed to trust her to Cairness and an escort of three soldiers. He could ill spare time from the telegraph line, under the circumstances; it might be too imperatively needed at any moment. He mounted his wife quickly. "You are not afraid?" he asked. But he knew so well that she was not, that he did not wait for her answer.

Cairness mounted, and looked up anxiously at the sky, as he gathered his reins between his fingers. The wind had begun to howl through the branches of the trees. It promised to be a wild ride. "I will be back to-night, Landor, to report," he said; "that is, if the storm doesn't delay us." And they started off down the hill.

He rode beside Mrs. Landor along the road in the ravine bed, and the soldiers followed some twenty yards in the rear. They were making as much haste as was wise at the outset, and Felipa bent forward against the ever rising wind, as her horse loped steadily on.

There was a mutter of thunder and a far-off roar, a flame of lightning through the trees, and the hills and mountains shook. Just where they rode the cañon narrowed to hardly more than a deep gulch, and the river ran close beside the road.

"We must get out of this," Cairness started to say, urging his little bronco; but even as he spoke there was a murmur, a rustle, a hissing roar, and the rain fell in one solid sheet, blinding them, beating them down.

"Take care!" yelled Cairness, as Felipa, dazed and without breath, headed straight for the stream. He bent and snatched at her bridle, and, swerving, started up the sheer side of the hill. She clung to the mane instinctively, but her horse stumbled, struggled, slipped, and scrambled. She had lost all control of it, and the earth and stones gave way beneath its hoofs just as a great wall of water bore down the bed of the river, sweeping trees and rocks away, and making the ground quiver.

"Let go your stirrup!" cried Cairness, in her ear; and as she kicked her foot loose, he leaned far from the saddle and threw his arm around her, swinging her up in front of him across the McLellan pommel, and driving the spurs into his horse's belly. It had the advantage of her horse in that it was an Indian animal, sure of foot as a burro, and much quicker. With one dash it was up the hillside, while the other rolled over and over, down into the torrent of the cloud burst.

Cairness slid to the ground, still holding her close, and set her upon her feet at once. He had not so much as tightened the grasp of his arm about her, nor held her one-half second longer than there was absolute need.

He tried to see if the soldiers were safe, but though they were not a hundred feet away, the trunks and the mist of water hid them. The rain still pounded down, but the rush of the wind was lessening sensibly.

Felipa leaned against the tree under which they were, fairly protected from the worst of the storm;

and Cairness stood beside her, holding his winded horse. There was nothing to be said that could be said. She had lost for once her baffling control of the commonplace in speech, and so they stood watching the rain beat through the wilderness, and were silent.

When the storm had fairly passed, they found Felipa's gray lodged in the root of a tree some distance down the creek; in no way hurt, oddly enough, but trembling and badly frightened. The saddle, even, was uninjured, though the pigskin was water-soaked and slippery.

Cairness sent one of the soldiers back to report their safety to Landor, and they mounted and hurried on again, swimming the river twice, and reaching the post some time after noon.

The commandant's wife took Mrs. Landor in, and would have put her to bed with hot drinks and blankets, but that Felipa would have nothing more than some dry clothes and a wrapper in place of her wet habit. The clothes were her own, brought by one of the men, safe in a rubber poncho, but the wrapper belonged to her hostess, who was portly, whereas Felipa was slender. But to Cairness, who had stopped for luncheon, she seemed, in the voluminous dull red draperies, more splendid than ever before.

He rode away at once after they had lunched. And Felipa went to her room, and dropped down shivering beside the little red-hot iron stove, moaning between her clenched teeth.

VIII

Six years of fighting, of bloodshed, of heavy loss in blood and treasure to the government, the careers of the incarnate devils Juh, Victorio, and Geronimo — all the evils let loose on the southwest from '78 to '85 were traceable primarily to the selling of bad whiskey to a hunting party of Chiricahuas by two storekeepers, greedy of gain.

Of course there were complications following, a long and involved list of them. Of course the Indians only sought the excuse, and very probably would have made it if it had not been made for them. And of course the Interior Department bungled under the guidance of politicians, of whom the best that possibly can be said is that they were stupid tools of corrupt men in the territories, who were willing to turn the blood of innocent settlers into gold for their own pockets.

And still, those who hated the Apache most — officers who had fought them for years, who were laboring under no illusions whatever; the Commanders of the Department of Arizona and of the Division of the Missouri — reported officially that Victorio and his people had been unjustly dealt with. And these were men, too, who had publicly expressed, time and again, their opinion that the Apaches were idle and worthless vaga-

bonds, utterly hopeless, squalid, untrustworthy; robbers and thieves by nature. They had none of Crook's so many times unjustified faith in the red savage,—that faith which, wantonly betrayed, brought him to defeat and bitter disappointment at the last. Since Crook had gone to the northern plains, in the spring of '75, the unrest among the Apaches had been steadily growing, until five years later it was beyond control, and there began the half decade which opened with Victorio on the war-path, and closed with the closing of the career of the unfortunate general — most luckless example of the failing of failure — and the subjection of Geronimo.

The never ending changes of the service, which permitted no man to remain in one spot for more than two years at the utmost limit, had sent Landor's troop back to Grant, and it was from there that he was ordered out at the beginning of the summer.

The curtain-raiser to the tragedy about to come upon the boards was a little comedy.

One fine afternoon the post was moving along in its usual routine — that quiet which is only disturbed by the ever recurring military formalities and the small squabbles of an isolated community. There had been a lull in the war rumors, and hope for the best had sprung up in the wearied hearts of the plains service, much as the sun had that day come out in a scintillating air after an all-night rain-storm.

Mrs. Landor sat on the top step of her porch. Landor was with her, also his second lieutenant Ellton, and

Brewster, who in the course of events had come into the troop. There had been, largely by Felipa's advice, an unspoken agreement to let the past be. A troop divided against itself cannot stand well on the inspector general's reports. And as Brewster was about to marry the commanding officer's daughter, it was well to give him the benefit of the doubt of his entire sanity when he had been under the influence of what had been a real, if short-lived, passion for Felipa. They were all discussing the feasibility of getting up an impromptu picnic to the foot-hills.

"Miss McLane will go, I suppose?" asked Felipa.

Brewster answered that she would, of course. He was rather annoyingly proprietary and sure of her.

"But you have no Jill," she said, smiling at Ellton. His own smile was very strained, but she did not see that, nor the shade of trouble in his nice blue eyes.

There fell a moment's pause. And it was broken by the sound of clashing as of many cymbals, the clatter of hoofs, the rattle of bouncing wheels, and around the corner of the line there came tearing a wagon loaded with milk tins. A wild-eyed man, hatless, with his hair on end, lashed his ponies furiously and drew up all of a heap, in front of the commanding officer's quarters.

Landor and his lieutenant jumped up and ran down the walk. "What's all this, Dutchy?" they asked.

Dutchy was a little German, who kept a milk ranch some seven miles from the post. "Apachees, Apachees," he squealed, gasping for breath.

"Where?" the commandant asked.

"I see dem pass by my ranch. Dey weel run off all my stock, seexty of dem, a hundred mebee. I come queek to tell you."

"You came quick all right enough," said Landor, looking at the lathered broncos. But Major McLane was inquiring, and the result of his inquiries was that two troops were hurried in hot pursuit.

The post was tremendously excited. As the cavalry trotted off up the slope toward the foot-hills, the men left behind went to the back of the post and watched, women looked through field-glasses, from the upper windows, children balanced upon the fences of the back yards, and Chinese cooks scrambled to the top of chicken coops and woodsheds, shading their eyes with their hands and peering in the direction of the gap. Dogs barked and hens cackled and women called back and forth. Down at the sutler's store the German was being comforted with beer at a dollar a bottle.

In the storm-cleared atmosphere the troops could be seen until they turned into the gap, and shortly thereafter they reappeared, coming back at a trot.

The milk ranch and the stock were unhurt, and there were not even any Indian signs. It was simply another example, on the milkman's part, of the perfection to which the imagination of the frontier settler could be cultivated.

"I see him, I see him all the same," he protested, with tears and evident conviction.

"I guess not," said Landor, tolerantly, as he turned

his horse over to his orderly; "but, anyway," he added to Ellton, "we had a picnic — of a sort."

And before the next morning the picnic that kept the southwest interested for five years had begun. Victorio and two hundred hostiles had left the Mescalero Agency for good and all, killing, burning, torturing, and destroying as they went, and troops from all the garrisons were sent out post haste.

At noon Landor got his orders. He was to leave at four o'clock, and when he told Felipa she planned for dinner at three, with her usual manner of making all things as pleasant as possible, and indulging in no vain and profitless regrets. "We may as well have Mr. Brewster and Nellie McLane, too," she decided, and went off in search of them, bareheaded and dancing with excitement. She dearly loved rumors of war. The prospect of a scout was always inspiriting to her.

Ellton messed with them regularly, but he was not to go out, because he was acting adjutant. To his intense disgust and considerable mortification — for he was young and very enthusiastic and burdened with ideals — he was obliged to appear spick and span in irreproachable undress, beside his superiors in their campaign clothes.

"They're out from Apache, two troops under Kimball and Dutton; Morris has a band of scouts, Bayard has sent two troops, Wingate one. Oh! it's going to be grim-visaged war and all that, this time, sure," Brewster prophesied.

Ellton could not eat. He bewailed his hard fate unceasingly.

"Shut up," said Brewster, with malicious glee. "They also serve who only stand and wait, you know," he chuckled. "You can serve your admiring and grateful country quite as well in the adjutant's office as summering on the verdant heights of the Mogollons."

Ellton retaliated with more spirit. "Or guarding a water hole on the border for two or three months, and that's quite as likely to be your fate."

"True, too," Brewster admitted perforce.

"I've been talking to a fellow down at the Q. M. corral," Landor said, "Englishman named Cairness, — Charley Cairness. He's going as a scout. He can't resist war's alarms. He used to be in my troop a few years ago, and he was a first-rate soldier — knew his place a good deal better than if he had been born to it, which he very obviously wasn't."

"Squaw-man, isn't he?" Brewster asked.

Landor shrugged his shoulder, but Felipa would not have it so. "You know he is not, Jack," she said a little petulantly, which was noticeably unwonted on her part.

"I don't know anything whatever about it," he answered; "that is none of my affair. I should be surprised if he were, and I must say I am inclined to think he is not."

"I know he is not," she said decisively.

"I beg pardon," said Brewster, pointedly, accentuating the slight awkwardness.

But Landor was not aware that there was any. "Cairness is a very decent sort of a fellow," he said

good-humoredly. "And, personally, I am indebted to him for having saved Mrs. Landor's life up Black River way."

Ellton filled in the pause that threatened, with a return to the dominant topic. "This not having any pack-train," he opined, "is the very deuce and all. The only transportation the Q. M. can give you is a six-mule team, isn't it?"

"Yes; but it happens to be enough for the next few weeks. We are going to camp around San Tomaso to afford the settlers protection. We can't follow any trails, those are our orders, so the pack-train doesn't matter anyway. By that time they will have scared up one."

As they came out from dinner the orderlies had the horses at the door. Landor gave his wife parting instructions the while Brewster took an ostentatiously affectionate farewell of Miss McLane, who was herself neither so affectionate nor so sorrowful as she might have been expected to be. The adjutant watched them, furtively and unhappily. Felipa herself was not as unmoved as usual.

When Landor had trotted off, and she and the girl were left alone, she went into the house and came back with a pair of field-glasses. Through them she could see her husband riding at the head of the column, along the road, and another figure beside him, mounted on a bony little pinto bronco.

So he was near her again. She had not seen him in many months, but she had felt that he must be always,

as he had been through those days in the fastnesses of the Sierra Blanca, following her afar off, yet near enough to warn her, if need arose. She was too superstitious to watch him out of sight, and she turned back into the house, followed by Miss McLane, just as stable call sounded, and the white-clad soldiers tramped off to the corrals.

IX

Under the midnight sky, misty pale and dusted with glittering stars, the little shelter tents of Landor's command shone in white rows. The campfires were dying; the herd, under guard, was turned out half a mile or more away on a low mesa, where there was scant grazing; and the men, come that afternoon into camp, were sleeping heavily, after a march of some forty miles, — all save the sentry, who marched up and down, glancing from time to time at the moving shadows of the herd, or taking a sight along his carbine at some lank coyote scudding across the open.

But presently he saw, coming from down the road, two larger bodies, which showed themselves soon, in the light of the stars against the sands, to be a pair of horsemen and evidently no Apaches. He watched them. They rode straight up to the camp and answered his challenge. They wished, they said, to speak to the officer in command.

The sentry was of the opinion that it was an unseemly hour to arouse a man who had marched all day, but it was not for him to argue. He walked deliberately, very deliberately indeed, that the citizens might be impressed, over to Landor's tent and awoke him. "There's two citizens here, sir, asking to see you,

sir." His tone plainly disclaimed any part in the affair.

Landor came out, putting on his blouse, and went over to the horsemen. One of them dismounted and raised his hat.

"My name, sir, is Foster."

Landor expressed pleasure, without loss of words.

"I represent, sir, the citizens of San Tomaso."

"Yes?" said Landor. He knew the citizens of the district, and attached no particular sacredness to the person of their envoy.

"They have expressed the desire that I should convey to you, Colonel —"

"I am Captain — Captain Landor."

"Captain Landor," he corrected urbanely, "pleased to meet you, sir. They have expressed the desire that I should convey to you, sir, their wish to accompany you in the search for hostile Apaches."

That was evidently how it was to go into the papers. The officer knew it well enough, but he explained with due solemnity that he was acting under instructions, and was not to follow Indians into the hills. "I am only to camp here to protect the citizens of the valley against possible raids."

The civilian protested. "But there is a big company of us, sir, thirty or thirty-five, who can put you on the trail of a large band."

Landor explained again, with greater detail, vainly trying to impress the nature of a military order on the civilian brain. "It would not do for me to disobey my

instructions. And besides there are several officers who are to follow trails, out with larger commands. I have no pack-train, and I can't."

It did not seem to strike the representative of the citizens of San Tomaso that that was much of an argument. He continued to urge.

"Of course," said the officer, "I understand that the hostiles are not in the immediate vicinity?"

"Well, not in the immediate vicinity," he admitted. "No; but they passed along the foot-hills, and stole some stock, an' killed three men no later than this evening."

"Say we were to get off at sun-up, then," objected Landor, "they would even in that way have twelve hours' start of us."

"Yes, sir. But they ain't likely to travel fast. They'll think themselves safe enough up there in the mountains. We could easy overtake them, being as we wouldn't be hampered with drove stock. They stole about fifty head, an' we could most likely get it back if we started at once. It is the wish of the citizens of San Tomaso, ain't it?" He turned to the man who had remained mounted, and who had not opened his mouth. The man nodded.

"I couldn't follow more than two days," Landor expostulated hopelessly. "As I tell you, I've no pack-train. The men would have to carry their rations in their saddle pockets."

Foster hastened to assure him that two days would easily do it. "We know the country round here, Colo-

nel, know it better than the hostiles themselves; and a big party of us volunteers to put you on the trail and bring you to them. You can't hardly refuse, seein' as you say you are here to protect us, and this is the protection we ask, to get back the stock we've lost."

Landor stood considering and pulling at his mustache, as his way was. Then he turned on his heel and went back to the tent for Brewster. He explained the matter to him. "I tell Mr. Foster," he said, "just what risk I would take if I acted contrary to orders, but the force of my argument doesn't seem to strike him. If any harm were to come to the citizens around here, I'd be responsible."

"You won't, I don't guess, if it was the citizens' own wish," insisted the indomitable one. "You wouldn't be gone more than two days at the outside. And a big party of us will go with you."

"How many did you say?" he wanted to know, having the laudable intention of committing the man before Brewster.

And Foster answered him that there would be thirty or forty.

Was he quite certain that the trail was of hostiles, and not of cow-boys or of other troops?

"Certain, dead sure. It's a band of Apaches that went across the river. Why, half a dozen seen them."

Landor consulted with his lieutenant. "Very well," he said in the end, "I'll go. I take serious risks, but I understand it to be the wish of the citizens hereabouts."

Their envoy assured him that it most certainly was, and became profuse in acknowledgments; so that Landor shut him off. He had come many miles that day and must be on the march again at dawn, and wanted what sleep he could get. "When and where will you meet me?" he demanded with the curtness of the military, so offensive to the undisciplined.

"At eight o'clock, sir," he answered resentfully, "in front of the dry-goods store on the main street. If that is convenient for your men."

"That will do," said Landor. "See there is no delay," and he wheeled about and went back to his tent with Brewster.

The citizens rode off.

"They won't be ready. No use making haste, Captain," Cairness suggested at daybreak, as Landor hurried the breakfast and saddling. They knew that the chances were ten to one that it would be a wild goose chase, and the captain already repented him. But at seven the men were mounted, with two days' rations in their saddle bags, and trotting across the flat in the fragrance of the yet unheated day, to the settlement of San Tomaso.

Two aimless citizens lounged on their horses, rapt in argument and the heavy labor of chewing — so much so that they barely took notice of the troops.

Landor rode up to them and made inquiries for Foster.

"Foster?" one drawled, "he'll be along presently, I reckon."

Landor went back to his command and waited. Another man rode up and joined the two. Ten minutes passed, and the troops grew restless.

Landor went forward again. "Can you, gentlemen, tell me," he demanded a trifle wrathfully, "where I can find Mr. Foster?" They reckoned, after deliberation, that he might be in Bob's saloon. Which might Bob's saloon be? The man pointed, hooking his thumb over his shoulder, and went on with his conversation and his quid. A dozen or more loafers, chiefly Mexicans, had congregated in front of the dry-goods store.

Landor rode over to Bob's place, and giving his horse to the trumpeter, strode in. There were eight men around the bar, all in campaign outfit, and all in various stages of intoxication. Foster was effusive. He was glad to see the general. General Landor, these were the gentlemen who had volunteered to assist Uncle Sam. He presented them singly, and invited Landor to drink. The refusal was both curt and ungracious. "If we are to overtake the hostiles, we have got to start at once," he suggested.

But it was full two hours, in the end, before they did start. Flasks had to be replenished, farewell drinks taken, wives and families parted from, the last behests made, of those going upon an errand of death. Citizens burning with ardor to protect their hearths and stock were routed out of saloons and dance halls, only to slip away again upon one pretext or another.

The sun was now high and blazing down into the one street of the mud settlement. The enlisted men

were angry that Landor, fearing they, too, would be led astray into dives, would not dismount them. Sitting still in the full sun, when even in the shade the mercury is many degrees above the hundreds, is not calculated to improve the disposition. But at length the volunteers were herded together. The thirty-five promised had dwindled to eight, and Foster was not of the number. He came lurching up at the last moment to explain that he would be unable to go. His wife was in hysterics, he said.

So the troops and the volunteers rode away without him, and a few miles off, among the foot-hills, struck the trail. Here Landor, giving ear to the advice of the citizens, found himself whirled around in a very torrent of conflicting opinions. No two agreed. The liquor had made them ugly. He dismounted the command for rest, and waited, filled with great wrath.

"I ought to have known better than to come at all," he told Brewster, as they stood beside their horses; "it is always like this."

Brewster nodded. He had seen the same thing himself. The territorial citizen was a known quantity to both of them.

Cairness came up. "Are we going into camp, Captain?" he wanted to know, "or are those fellows going to follow the trail?"

Landor took his arm from the saddle and stood upright, determinedly. "We are going to stop this mob business, that's what we are going to do," he said, and he went forward and joined in a discussion that was

upon the verge of six-shooters. He set forth in measured tones, and words that reverberated with the restrained indignation behind them, that he had come upon the assurance that he was to strike Indians, that his men had but two days' rations in their saddle bags, and that he was acting upon his own responsibility, practically in disobedience of orders. If the Indians were to be hit, it must be done in a hurry, and he must get back to the settlements. He held up his hands to check a flood of protests and explanations. "There has got to be a head to this," his drill-trained voice rang out, "and I propose to be that head. My orders have got to be obeyed."

There was a murmur. They had elected a captain of their own; they were Indian fighters of experience themselves.

Landor suggested his own experience of close on two decades, and further that he was going to command the whole outfit, or going to go back and drop the thing right there. They assented to the first alternative, with exceedingly bad grace, and with worse grace took the place of advance guard he detailed them to, four hundred yards ahead. "You know the country. You are my guides, and you say you are going to lead me to the Indians. Now do it." There was nothing conciliating in his speech, whatever, and he sat on his horse, pointing them to their positions with arm outstretched, and the frown of an offended Jove. When they had taken it, grumbling, the column moved.

"It's only a small trail, anyway," Cairness informed

them as a result of a minute examination he had made, walking round and leading his bronco, bending double over the signs, "just some raiding party of twelve or fifteen bucks. Shot out from the main body and ran into the settlements to steal stock probably."

Landor agreed with him, "I told the citizens so, but they knew better."

"They are travelling rapidly, of course. We shan't overtake them."

"I dare say not," said Landor, his face growing black again; "they'll cover fifty or seventy-five miles a day. We can't do that, by a good deal. We couldn't even if those damned civilians would keep their distance ahead."

But this the civilians were very plainly not minded to do. They dropped back, now to cinch up, now to take a drink from the flasks, now to argue, once for one of their number to recover from an attack of heart disease.

Landor swore. He would keep them their proper distance ahead, if he had to halt at all their halts from now to sunset.

They were high among the mountains, and here and there in the shadows of the rocks and pines were patches of snow, left even yet from the winter. By all the signs the trail was already more than half a day old.

Landor's fear of leaving the settlements unguarded grew. "We will get up among these mountains and be delayed, and we are in no condition whatever to travel, anyway," he told Brewster, as the advance

guard halted again, and Landor, with curses in his heart but a civil tongue withal, trotted up to them.

They were fighting. "Captain, what do you say to following this trail?" they clamored.

Landor explained to them that he was not doing the thinking, that it was their campaign. "You are my guides. You know the country, and I don't." He reminded them again that they had promised to lead him to Indians, and that he was ready to be led. If they thought the hostiles were to be reached by following the trail, he would follow it.

Some of them did think so. Some of them thought on the contrary, that it would be surer to make a detour, leaving the trail. They knew the spot, the bed of an ancient mountain lake, where the hostiles were sure to camp.

Landor sat and heard them out, silence on his lips and wrath upon his brow. "We will go wherever you say," he reiterated immovably.

The captain they had elected for themselves was for following; the seven others agreed upon a detour. They had ideas of their own concerning obedience to superiors. They left the trail in spite of the vehement assurance of their captain that they would without doubt get all manner of profanity knocked out of them, and hasten their inevitable journey to Gehenna if they went into the timber.

The advance guard advanced less and less. Half drunk and ever drinking, in quaking fear of the timber, it kept falling back.

"I'll be hanged," opined Landor, as his own horse bit at the croup of a citizen's horse, eliciting a kick and a squeal, "I'll be hanged if you shall demoralize my column like this. You'll keep ahead if I have to halt here all night to make you. I've given you the post of honor. If I put my men in the van, I'd choose the best ones, and they'd be flattered, too. You wouldn't catch them skulking back on the command."

They spurred forward unwillingly, thus urged. At sundown they came to the old lake bed and camped there. According to the citizens it was a regular Indian camping-place for the hostiles, since the days of Cochise.

The horses were tied to a ground line, to avoid the embarrassment of a loose herd, in the event of an engagement. Pickets were sent out to give warning at the approach of Indians. It was winter here in the mountains, while it was hot summer in the alkali flats below, but the men were forbidden fires. And it was a fierce grievance to the citizens, as was also that they were not allowed to go out to shoot wild turkeys. They remonstrated sulkily.

Landor's patience was worn out. "It's a confoundedly curious thing," he told them, "for men who really want to find Indians, to go shooting and building fires." And he sent them to rest upon their arms and upon the cold, damp ground.

But there was no night alarm, and at daybreak it began to be apparent to the troops that they had been led directly away from all chance of one. They made

fires, ate their breakfast, resaddled, and took their way back to the settlements, doubling on their own trail. They came upon signs of a yet larger band, and it was more probable than ever that the valley had been in danger.

Landor cursed the malpais and the men who were leading him over it. "How much more of this rough country is there going to be?" he demanded, as they stopped to shoe two horses that had come unshod on the sharp rocks. "Colonel," they made answer with much dignity, "we are more anxious than you to get back to our defenceless women and children."

The defenceless women and children were safe, however: a captain, ranking Landor, reported to that effect when he met them some dozen miles outside San Tomaso. He reported further that he had a pack-train for Landor and orders to absorb his troop. Landor protested at having to retrace their trail at once. His men and his stock were in no state to travel. The men were footsore and blistered. They had led their horses, for the most part, up and down rough hills for two days. But the trail was too hot and too large to be abandoned. They unsaddled, and partaking together of coffee and bacon and biscuits, mounted and went off once more. Their bones ached, and the feet of many of them bled; but the citizens had gone their way to their homes in the valley, and they felt that, on the whole, they had reason to be glad.

X

It was tea time at the Circle K Ranch. But no one was enjoying the hour of rest. Kirby sat on the couch and abstractedly ate slice after slice of thin bread and butter, without speaking. Mrs. Kirby made shift to darn the bunch of stockings beside her, but her whole attention was strained to listening. The children did not understand, though they felt the general uneasiness, and whispered together as they looked at the pictures in the illustrated paper, months old.

Kirby's assistants, the two young Englishmen, had not come back when they were due. One had gone to the mail station in the valley, three days before, and he should have returned at noon, at the furthest limit. By three o'clock, the other had jumped on a horse and gone out to look for him. And now, one was lying in the road five miles from the ranch, with an arrow through his eye. The other, a mile nearer home, was propped against a pine trunk, so that the ragged hole beneath his shoulder blade, where a barb had been torn out, did not show. His wide eyes, upon the lid of one of which the blood from a head wound had clotted, looked up sightless through the branches, at a patch of blue sky. Their end had been a common

enough one, and had come to them both without a moment of warning.

At noon that day a cow-boy had ridden from the hills with a rumor that Victorio's people were about. But Kirby had kept it from his wife. It might not be true. And even if it were, the danger was really small. With the hands and the two Englishmen, the quadrangle of log cabins, well stocked with food and ammunition, could withstand any attack. It had been built and planned to that end.

The silence, cut by the nervous whispering of the children, became unendurable. "Are you very uneasy about them?" Mrs. Kirby asked.

"It's not so much that," he evaded, getting up to put a lump of sugar he did not need into his tea, "it's not so much that as it is the everlasting strain of fighting the hands. It would be easier to meet an open rebellion than it is to battle against their sullen ugliness."

Mrs. Kirby could understand that very well. She had the same thing to oppose day after day with the woman, and of late it had been more marked.

Out in the corral the cow-boy was holding forth. The men had stopped work on the instant that Kirby had turned his back. If Kirby could loll on soft cushions and drink tea, as free-born Americans and free-souled Irishmen they might do the same. "It's all right," said the cow-boy, with a running accompaniment of profanity, as he cleaned his brutal Mexican bit. "Johnny Bull don't have to believe in it if he don't like. But all the same, I seen a feller over here

to the 3 C Range, and he told me he seen the military camped over to San Tomaso a week ago, and that there was a lot of stock, hundred head or so, run off from the settlements. You see, them Apaches is making for the southern Chiricahuas over in Sonora to join the Mexican Apaches, and they're going to come this here way. You see!" and he rubbed at the rust vigorously with a piece of soft rawhide.

The woman joined her voice. She had a meat cleaver in her hand, and there was blood on her apron where she had wiped the roast she was now leaving to burn in the stove. "Like as not we'll all be massacred. I told Bill to get off this place two weeks ago, and he's such an infernal loafer he couldn't make up his mind to move hisself." She flourished her cleaver toward the big Texan, her husband, who balanced on the tongue of a wagon, his hands in his pockets, smiling ruefully and apologetically, and chewing with an ardor he never put to any other work. "We been here four years now," she went on raspingly, "and if you all feel like staying here to be treated like slaves by these John Bulls, you can do it. But you bet I know when I've got enough. To-morrow I quits." Her jaws snapped shut, and she stood glaring at them defiantly.

The words of a woman in a community where women are few carry almost the weight of inspiration. Be she never so hideous or so vile, she is in some measure a Deborah, and the more yet, if she be moved to the lust and love of revenge of the prophetess who sang

in the frenzy of blood drunkenness, "Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber, the Kenite, be. Blessed shall she be above women in the tent."

The Declaration of Independence roused the screeching eagle of freedom in the breasts of all the white men. With the Mexicans it was a slightly different sentiment. At best they could never be relied upon for steady service. A couple of months' pay in their pockets, and they must rest them for at least six. It is always to be taken into consideration when they are hired. They had been paid only the day before. And, moreover, the Greaser follows the Gringo's lead easily — to his undoing.

The murmurs in the corral rose louder. It was not that Kirby and his partners underpaid, underfed, or overworked the American citizens. It was that their language was decent and moderate; and the lash of the slave driver would have stung less than the sight of the black coats and the seven o'clock dinner. In the midst of white savages and red, the four clung to the forms of civilization with that dogged persistence in the unessential, that worship of the memory of a forsaken home, for which the Englishman, time and again, lays down his life without hesitation. That was the grievance.

While Kirby went through the oppressive rite of afternoon tea within the slant-roofed log cabin, and tried to hide from his wife the fear which grew as the shadows lengthened across the clearing out in the corral, the men had reached open mutiny. The smouldering sullenness

had at last burst into flaming defiance, blown by the gale of the woman's wrath.

After he had had his tea Kirby got up, went out to the corral, and called to one of the men, who hesitated for a moment, then slouched over, kicking with his heavy booted toe as he passed at the hocks of a horse in one of the stalls. Kirby saw him do it, but he checked his wrath. He had learned to put up with many things. "Don't you think," he suggested, "that it might be a good idea for you and some other man to ride down the road a bit — "

The man interrupted, "I ain't going daown the road, nor anywheres else before supper — nor after supper neither, if I don't feel like it." He was bold enough in speech, but his eyes dropped before Kirby's indignant ones.

It was a fatal want of tact perhaps, characteristic of the race, but then the characteristic is so fine. "You will do whatever I tell you to do," the voice was low and strained, but not wavering. It reached the group by the harness-room door.

With one accord they strode forward to the support of their somewhat browbeaten brother. What they would do was exactly as they pleased, they told the tyrant. They shook their fists in his face. It was all in the brutal speech of the frontier, mingled with the liquid ripple of argot Spanish, and its vicious, musical oaths. The deep voice of the woman carried above everything, less decent than the men. It was a storm of injury.

Kirby was without fear, but he was also without redress. He turned from them, his face contracted with the pain of his impotence, and walked back to the house. "I could order them off the ranch to-night," he told his wife, as he dropped on a chair, and taking up the hearth brush made a feint of sweeping two or three cinders from the floor; "but it's ten to one they wouldn't go and it would weaken my authority — not that I have any, to be sure — and besides," he flung down the brush desperately and turned to her, "I didn't want to tell you before, but there is a pretty straight rumor that Victorio's band, or a part of it, is in these hills. We may need the men at any time." Neither spoke of the two who should have been back hours ago. The night closed slowly down.

The Texan woman went back to the kitchen and finished cooking the supper for the hands — a charred sort of Saturnalian feast. "She can git her own dinner if she wants to," she proclaimed, and was answered by a chorus of approval.

While the men sat at the long table, shovelling in with knife and three-pronged fork the food of the master their pride forbade them to serve, a horse came at a run, up to the quadrangle, and a cow-boy rushed into the open doorway. "Apaches!" he gasped, clutching at the lintel, wild-eyed, "Apaches!"

They sprang up, with a clatter of dishes and overturning of benches and a simultaneous cry of "Whereabouts?"

He had seen a large band heading for the ranch, and

had found a dead white man on the north road, he said, and he gesticulated madly, his voice choked with terror.

Had it been all arranged, planned, and rehearsed for months beforehand, the action could not have been more united. They crowded past him out of the door and ran for the corrals, and each dragged a horse or a mule from the stalls, flinging on a halter or rope or bridle, whatever came to hand, from the walls of the harness room.

But there was more stock than was needed.

"Turn the rest loose," cried the woman, and set the example herself.

Kirby, hurrying from the house to learn the cause of the new uproar, was all but knocked down and trodden under the hoofs of all his stock, driven from the enclosure with cracking of whips and with stones. Then a dozen ridden horses crowded over the dropped bars, the woman in the lead astride, as were the men.

"What is this?" he shouted, grabbing at a halter-shank and clinging to it until a knife slashed down on his wrist.

"Apaches on the north road," they called back; and the woman screamed above it all a devilish farewell, "Better have 'em to dinner in claw-hammer coats."

It was a sheer waste of good ammunition, and it might serve as a signal to the Indians as well; Kirby knew it, and yet he emptied his six-shooter into the deep shadows of the trees where they had vanished, toward the south.

Then he ran into the corral, and, snatching up a lan-

tern from the harness room, looked around. It was empty. There was only a pack-burro wandering loose and nosing at the grains in the mangers.

He turned and went back to the cabin, where his wife stood at the door, with the children clinging to her. From down the north road there came a blood-freezing yell, and a shot, reverberating, rattling from hill to hill, muffling into silence among the crowding pines.

As he shut the door and bolted it with the great iron rods, there tore into the clearing a score of vague, savage figures. It looked, when he saw it for an instant, as he put up the wooden blinds, like some phantom dance of the devils of the mountains, so silent they were, with their unshod ponies, so quick moving. And then a short silence was broken by cries and shots, the pinge of bullets, and the whizz of arrows.

There were two rooms to the cabin where they were, the big sitting room and the small bedchamber beyond. Kirby went into the bedroom and came out with two rifles and a revolver. He put the revolver into his wife's hands. "I'll do my best, you know, dear. But if I'm done for, if there is no hope for you and the children, use it," he said. And added, "You understand?"

Of a truth she understood only too well, that death with a bullet through the brain could be a tender mercy.

"Not until there is no hope," he impressed, as he put the barrel of his rifle through a knot hole and fired at random.

She reloaded for him, and fired from time to time herself, and he moved from the little round hole in the wall to one in the window blind, in the feeble, the faithless hope that the Indians might perhaps be deceived, might fancy that there was more than the one forsaken man fighting with unavailing courage for the quiet woman who stayed close by his side, and for the two children, huddled whimpering in one corner, their little trembling arms clasped round each other's necks.

Twenty, yes ten, of those who, as the sound of the firing reached their ears, were making off at a run down the south road for the settlement in the valley, could have saved the fair-haired children and the young mother, who helped in the fruitless fight without a plaint of fear. Ten men could have done it, could have done it easily ; but not one man. And Kirby knew it now, as the light of flames began to show through the chinks of the logs, and the weight of heavy bodies thudded against the door.

It was a strong door, built of great thick boards and barred with iron, but it must surely cede before fire and the blows. It wrenched on its huge hinges.

Kirby set down his gun and turned to his wife, holding out his arms. She went to him and he kissed her on the forehead and the lips, in farewell. "Good-by," he said ; "now take the children in there."

No need to tell her that her courage must not falter at that last moment, which would soon come. He knew it, as he looked straight into those steadfast, loving

eyes. She clung to his hand and stooped and kissed it, too; then she went to the children and took them, quivering and crying, into the other room, and closed the dividing door.

Kirby, with a revolver in each hand, placed himself before it. It would avail nothing. But a man must needs fight to the end. And the end was now.

There was a stronger blow at the door, as of a log used by way of a ram. It gave, swayed, and fell crashing in, and the big room swarmed with screaming fiends, their eyes gleaming wildly in the light of the burning hay and the branches piled against the cabin, as they waved their arms over their feathered heads.

The one man at bay whirled round twice, with a bullet in his heart and an arrow through his neck. "Now!" he made one fierce effort to cry, as he staggered again and dropped on his face, to be trampled under forty feet.

It was the signal to the woman in that other room behind the locked door, and above all the demoniacal sounds it reached her. Only an instant she hesitated, until that door, too, began to give. Then a cold muzzle of steel found, in the darkness, two little struggling, dodging faces — and left them marred. And once again the trigger was unflinchingly pulled, as greedy arms reached out to catch the white, woman's figure that staggered and fell.

* * * * * * * *

Cairness and Landor and a detachment of troops that had ridden hard all through the night, following an

appalling trail, but coming too late after all, found them so in the early dawn.

There was a mutilated thing that had once been a man's body on the floor in the half-burned log cabin. And in another room lay two children, whose smooth, baby foreheads were marked, each with a round violet-edged hole. Beside them was their mother, with her face turned to the rough boards — mercifully. For there had been no time to choose the placing of that last shot, and it had disfigured cruelly as it did its certain work.

XI

It was not quite an all-summer campaign. The United States government drove the hostiles over the border into the provinces of the Mexican government, which understood the problem rather better than ourselves, and hunted the Apache, as we the coyote, with a bounty upon his scalp.

Thereafter some of the troops sat down at the water-holes along the border to watch, and to write back pathetic requests for all the delicacies supplied by the commissariat, from anchovy paste and caviare to tinned mushrooms and cove oysters. A man may live upon bacon and beans and camp bread, or upon even less, when his duty to his country demands, but it is not in the Articles of War that he should continue to do so any longer than lack of transportation compels.

Others of the troops were ordered in, and among them was Landor's. It had gone out for a twenty days' scout, and had been in the field two months. It was ragged and all but barefoot, and its pack-train was in a pitiable way. Weeks of storm in the Mogollons and days of quivering heat on the plains had brought its clothing and blankets to the last stages.

Moreover, Landor was very ill. In the Mogollons he had gathered and pressed specimens of the gorgeous

wild flowers that turn the plateaux into a million-hued Eden, and one day there had lurked among the blossoms a sprig of poison weed, with results which were threatening to be serious. He rode at the head of his column, however, as it made for home by way of the Aravaypa Cañon.

Were the cañon of the Aravaypa in any other place than Arizona, which, as the intelligent public knows, is all one wide expanse of dry and thirsty country, a parched place in the wilderness, a salt land, and not inhabited; were it in any other place, it would be set forth in railway folders, and there would be camping privileges and a hotel, and stages would make regular trips to it, and one would come upon groups of excursionists on burros, or lunching among its boulders. Already it has been in a small way discovered, and is on the road to being vulgarized by the camera. The lover of Nature, he who loves the soul as well as the face of her, receives when he sees a photograph of a fine bit of scenery he had felt in a way his own property until then, something the blow that the lover of a woman does when he learns that other men than he have known her caresses.

But in the days of Victorio and his predecessors and successors, Aravaypa Cañon was a fastness. Men went in to hunt for gold, and sometimes they came out alive, and sometimes they did not. Occasionally Apaches met their end there as well.

There was one who had done so now. The troops looking up at him, rejoiced. He was crucified upon an

improvised cross of unbarked pine branches, high up at the top of a sheer peak of rock. He stood out black and strange against the whitish blue of the sky. His head was dropped upon his fleshless breast, and there was a vulture perched upon it, prying its hooked bill around in the eye sockets. Two more, gorged and heavy, balanced half asleep upon points of stone.

It was all a most charming commentary upon the symbol and practice of Christianity, in a Christian land, and the results thereof as regarded the heathen of that land — if one happened to see it in that way.

But the men did not. It was hardly to be expected that they should, both because the abstract and the ethical are foreign to the major part of mankind, in any case; and also because, with this particular small group of mankind, there was too fresh a memory of a dead woman lying by the bodies of her two children in a smouldering log cabin among the mountains and the pines.

They rode on, along the trail, at a walk and by file, and directly they came upon the other side of the question. Landor's horse stopped, with its forefeet planted, and a snort of fright. Landor had been bent far back, looking up at a shaft of rock that rose straight from the bottom and pierced the heavens hundreds of feet above, and he was very nearly unseated. But he caught himself and held up his hand as a signal to halt.

There were two bodies lying across the trail in front of him. He dismounted, and throwing his reins to the

trumpeter went forward to investigate. It was not a pleasant task. The men had been dead some time and their clothing was beginning to fall away in shreds. Some of their outfit was scattered about, and he could guess from it that they had been prospectors. A few feet away was the claim they had been working. Only their arms had been stolen, otherwise nothing appeared to be missing. There was even in the pockets considerable coin, in gold and silver, which Landor found, when he took a long knife from his saddle bags, and standing as far off as might be, slit the cloth open.

The knife was one he had brought from home, seizing it from the kitchen table at the last minute. It was very sharp and had been Felipa's treasured bread cutter. It came in very well just now, chiefly because of its length.

He called the first sergeant to his aid. Brewster was in the rear of the command, and, as had occurred with increasing frequency in the last two months, showed no desire to be of any more use than necessary. As for Cairness, who had been more of a lieutenant to Landor than the officer himself, he had left the command two days before and gone back to the San Carlos reservation.

So the captain and the first sergeant took up the money and the loose papers, together with a couple of rings from the hands, and wrapping them in a poncho, carried them off to serve as possible means of identification, for it had got beyond all question of features. Then two men moved the bodies from the

trail, with long sticks, and covered them with a pile of stones. Landor found a piece of board by the mouth of the claim and drew on it, with an end of charred stick, a skull and cross bones with a bow and arrow, and stood it up among the stones, in sign to all who might chance to pass thereby that since men had here died at the hands of the Apaches, other men might yet meet a like fate.

On the next day they were in the flat, nearing the post. There was a dust storm. Earlier in the morning the air had grown suddenly more dry, more close and lifeless than ever, suffocating, and a yellow cloud had come in the western sky. Then a hot wind began to blow the horses' manes and tails, to snarl through the greasewood bushes, and to snap the loose ends of the men's handkerchiefs sharply. The cloud had thinned and spread, high up in the sky, and the light had become almost that of a sullen evening. Black bits floated and whirled high overhead, and birds beat about in the gale. Gradually the gale and the dust had dropped nearer to the earth, a sand mist had gone into every pore and choked and parched. And now the tepid, thick wind was moaning across the plain, meeting no point of resistance anywhere.

Landor still rode at the head of his column, but his chin was sunk down on his red silk neckerchief, his face was swollen and distorted under its thick beard, and his eyes were glazed. They stared straight ahead into the sand whirl and the sulphurous glare. He had sent Brewster on ahead some hours before. "You

will want to see Miss McLane as soon as possible," he had said, "and there is no need of both of us here."

Brewster had taken an escort and disappeared down the vista of white sands and scrub growth, though it was Landor himself who should have gone. He swayed now in the saddle, his thick lips hung open, and he moved in a mental cloud as dense as the one of dust that poured round him.

Brewster reached the post some eighteen hours ahead of him. He reported, and saw Miss McLane; then he made himself again as other men and went down to the post trader's, with a definite aim in view, that was hardly to be guessed from his loitering walk. There were several already in the officers' room, and they talked, as a matter of course, of the campaign.

"Seen the way Landor's been catching it?" they asked.

And Brewster said he had not.

They went on to tell him that it was all in the Tucson papers, which Brewster knew, however, quite as well as they did themselves. He had made friends among the citizen volunteers of San Tomaso on the night they had camped by the old lake bed, and they had seen that he was kept supplied with cuttings.

But he pleaded entire ignorance, and the others were at considerable pains to enlighten him.

It appeared that Landor was accused of cowardice, and that his name was handled with the delicate sarcasm usual with Western journalism — as fine and pointed as a Stone-age axe.

Brewster poured himself a glass of beer and drank it contemplatively and was silent. Then he set it down on the bare table with a sharp little rap, suggesting determination made. It was suggestive of yet more than this, and caused them to say "Well?" with a certain eagerness. He shrugged his shoulders and changed the subject, refusing pointedly to be brought back to it, and succeeding altogether in the aim which had brought him down there.

But that same night he picked two for their reputation of repeating all they knew, and took them into his own rooms and told his story to them. And he met once again with such success that when Landor rode into the post the next day at about guard-mounting, three officers, meeting him, raised their caps and passed on.

It struck even through Landor's pain-blurred brain that it was odd. But the few faculties he could command still were all engaged in keeping himself in the saddle until he could reach his own house, where Ellton and Felipa were waiting to get him to his room.

He went upon the sick report at once, and for three days thereafter raved of crucified women with fair hair, of children lying dead in the cañon, of the holes in his boot soles, and a missing aparejo, also of certain cursed citizens, and the bad quality of the canned butter.

Then he began to come to himself and to listen to all that Felipa had to tell him of the many things she had not put in her short and labored letters. He saw

that she looked more beautiful and less well than when he had left her. There was a shadow of weariness on her face that gave it a soft wistfulness which was altogether becoming. He supposed it was because she had nursed him untiringly, as she had; but it did not occur to him to thank her, because she had done only what was a wife's duty, only what he would have done for her if the case had been reversed. Toward the end of the day he began to wonder that no one had been to see him, and he spoke of it.

"Mr. Ellton was here this morning," Felipa told him, "and he will be in again before retreat."

But he was not satisfied. His entry into the post and the cool greeting of the three officers began to come back to him.

Felipa could be untruthful with an untroubled soul and countenance to those she disliked. In her inherited code, treachery to an enemy was not only excusable, but right. But not even in order to save her husband worry could she tell him a shadow of an untruth. She did her best, which was far from good, to evade, however. The others would probably come, now that he could see them.

But had they come? he insisted.

The commandant had sent his orderly with a note.

He raised himself from the pillows too abruptly for a very weak man. "What is the matter, Felipa?" he demanded.

She told him that she did not know, and tried to coax him back to quietness.

"There is something," he insisted, dropping his head down again wearily.

"Perhaps there is," she admitted unwillingly.

He lay thinking for a while, then had her send the striker for Ellton, who promptly, and awkwardly, replied to the anxious question as to what might be the trouble, that he was not quite sure, but perhaps it had to do with these — "these" being a small roll of newspaper clippings he took from his portfolio.

Landor looked them over and gave them back contemptuously. "Well?" he said, "there's nothing new in all that. It's devilish exasperating, but it's old as Hamilcar. I made an enemy of a fellow from Tucson, reporter named Stone, over at the San Carlos Agency a few years ago. He's been waiting to roast me ever since. There must be something else."

The adjutant agreed reluctantly. "I think there is. It wouldn't surprise me if some one had been talking. I can't get at it. But you must not bother about it. It will blow over."

As an attempt at consolation, it failed. Landor fairly sprang into a sitting posture, with a degree of impulsiveness that was most unusual with him. His eyes glistened from the greenish circles around them. "Blow over! Good Lord! do you suppose I'll let it blow over? It's got to be sifted to the bottom. And you know that as well as I do." He lay weakly back again, and Felipa came to the edge of the bed and, sitting upon it, stroked his head with her cool hand.

Ellton ventured some assistance. "I do know this

much, that the C. O. got a telegram from some Eastern paper, asking if the reports of your cowardice as given in the territorial press were true."

Landor asked eagerly what he had answered.

"I didn't see the telegram, but it was in effect that he had no knowledge of anything of the sort, and put no faith in it."

"Doesn't he, though? Then why doesn't he come around and see me when I'm lying here sick?" He was wrathful and working himself back into a fever very fast.

Felipa shook her head at Ellton. "Don't get yourself excited about it, Jack dear," she soothed, and Ellton also tried to quiet him.

"He will come, I dare say. And so will the others, now that you are able to see them. Brewster inquired."

The captain's lips set.

Ellton wondered, but held his peace. And the commandant did go to Landor's quarters within the next few hours. Which was Ellton's doings.

"I don't know what has been said, Major, but something more than just what's in the papers must have gotten about. That sort of mud-slinging is too common to cause comment, even. It must be some spite work. There's no reason to suppose, surely, that after a quarter of a century of gallant service he's been and shown the white feather. He's awfully cut up, really he is. He's noticed it, of course, and it's too deuced bad, kicking a man when he's down sick and can't help himself."

The major stopped abruptly in his walk to and fro and faced him. "Do you know more about it, then, than Brewster who was with him?"

Ellton fairly leaped in the air. "Brewster! So it's Brewster! The in—" Then he recollected that Brewster was going to be the major's son-in-law, and he stopped short. "No wonder he keeps away from there," he simmered down.

"He told me it was because he and Landor had had some trouble in the field, and weren't on the best of terms."

"I say, Major, if he's got any charges to prefer why doesn't he put them on paper and send them in to you, or else shut up his head?" He was losing his temper again.

The major resumed his walk and did not answer.

Ellton went on, lapsing into the judicial. "In the meantime, anyway, a man's innocent until he's proven guilty. I say, do go round and see him. The others will follow your lead. He's awfully cut up and worried, and he's sick, you know."

So that evening when all the garrison was upon its front porches and the sidewalk, the major and the lieutenant went down the line to Landor's quarters. And their example was followed. But some hung back, and constraint was in the air.

Because of which Landor, as soon as he was up, went in search of the commanding officer, and found him in the adjutant's office, and the adjutant with him. He demanded an explanation. "If any one has been say-

ing anything about me, I want to know it. I want to face him. It can't be that newspaper rot. We are all too used to it."

"It seems, Landor," the major said, "to be rather that which is left unsaid."

Landor asked what he meant by that. "I'm sick of all this speaking in riddles," he said.

The major told him a little reluctantly. "Well, it's this, then: Brewster will not, or cannot, defend your conduct in the matter of the San Tomaso volunteers."

Landor sat speechless for a moment. Then he jumped up, knocking over a pile of registers. He seized a bone ruler, much stained with official inks, red and blue, and slapped it on the palm of his hand for emphasis. "I'll demand a court of inquiry into my conduct. This shan't drop, not until the strongest possible light has been turned on it. Why doesn't Brewster prefer charges? Either my conduct was such that he can defend it openly, or else it was such as to call for a court-martial, and to justify him in preferring charges. Certainly nothing can justify him in smirching me with damning silence. That is the part neither of an officer nor of a man." He kicked one of the registers out of the way, and it flapped across the floor and lay with its leaves crumpled under the fair leather covers.

"By George! McLane, it strikes me as devilish odd that you should all give ear to the insinuations of a shave-tail like Brewster, against an old hand like myself. Be that as it may, however, until this thing has been cleared up, I shall thank all of you to continue in your

attitude of suspicion, and not in any way draw on your charity by extending it to me. I shall demand a court of inquiry." He laid the ruler back on the desk. "I report for duty, sir," he added officially.

It was the beginning of a self-imposed Coventry. He sent in a demand for a court of inquiry, and Brewster, with much show of reluctance and leniency, preferred charges.

The post talked it over unceasingly, and commented on Landor's attitude. "He stalks around in defiant dignity and makes everybody uncomfortable," they said.

"Everybody ought to be uncomfortable," Ellton told them; "everybody who believed the first insinuation he heard ought to be confoundedly uncomfortable." He resigned from the acting adjutancy and returned to his troop duties, that Landor, who had relieved Brewster of most of the routine duties, and who was still fit for the sick list himself, might not be overburdened.

So the demand and the charges lay before the department commander, and there was a lull, during which Landor came upon further trouble, and worse. He undertook the examination of the papers he had found in the dead men's pockets. They had been buried in earth for two weeks.

He found that it had been father and son come from the Eastern states in search of the wealth that lay in that vague and prosperous, if uneasy, region anywhere west of the Missouri. And among the papers was a letter addressed to Felipa. Landor held it in the flat

of his hand and frowned, perplexed. He knew that it was Cairness's writing. More than once on this last scout he had noticed its peculiarities. They were unmistakable. Why was Cairness writing to Felipa? And why had he not used the mails? The old, never yet justified, distrusts sprang broad awake. But yet he was not the man to brood over them. He remembered immediately that Felipa had never lied to him. And she would not now. So he took the stained letter and went to find her.

She was sitting in her room, sewing. Of late she had become domesticated, and she was fading under it. He had seen it already, and he saw it more plainly than ever just now. She looked up and smiled. Her smile had always been one of her greatest charms, because it was rare and very sweet. "Jack," she greeted him, "what have you done with the bread knife you took with you, dear? I have been lost without it."

"I have it," he said shortly, standing beside her and holding out the letter.

She took it and looked from it to him, questioningly. "What is this?" she asked.

Then it was the first, at any rate. His manner softened.

"It smells horribly," she exclaimed, dropping it on the floor, "it smells of hospitals — disinfectants." But she stooped and picked it up again.

"It is from Cairness," said Landor, watching her narrowly. Her hand shook, and he saw it.

"From Cairness?" she faltered, looking up at him

with frightened eyes; "when did it come?" Her voice was as unsteady as her hands. She tore it open and began to read it there before him. He stood and watched her lips quiver and grow gray and fall helplessly open. If she had been under physical torture, she could have kept them pressed together, but not now.

"Where did you —" she began; but her voice failed, and she had to begin again. "Where did you get this?"

He told her, and she held it out to him. He started to take it, then pushed it away.

She put down her work and rose slowly to her feet before him. She could be very regal sometimes. Brewster knew it, and Cairness guessed it; but it was the first time it had come within Landor's experience, and he was a little awed.

"I wish you to read it, John," she said quietly.

He hesitated still. "I don't doubt you," he told her.

"You do doubt me. If you did not, it would never occur to you to deny it. You doubt me now, and you will doubt me still more if you don't read it. In justice to me you must."

It was very short, but he held it a long time before he gave it back.

"And do you care for him, too?" he asked, looking her straight in the eyes. It was a very calm question, put — he realized it with exasperation — as a father might have put it.

She told him that she did, quite as calmly. Her

manner and her tone said it was very unfortunate, that the whole episode was unfortunate, but that it was not her fault.

He went over to the window and stood looking out of it, his hands clasped behind his back. Some children were playing tag around the flag-staff, and he watched a long-limbed small daughter of the frontier dodging and running, and was conscious of being glad that she touched the goal.

It was characteristic of Felipa that she forgot him altogether and reread the letter, her breath coming in audible gasps.

"I give this to a friend," it ran, "to be delivered into your own hands, because I must tell you that, though I should never see you again — for the life I lead is hazardous, and chance may at any time take you away forever — I shall love you always. You will not be angry with me, I know. You were not that night by the campfire, and it is not the unwaveringly good woman who resents being told she is loved, in the spirit I have said it to you. I do not ask for so much as your friendship in return, but only that you remember that my life and devotion are yours, and that, should the time ever come that you need me, you send for me. I will come. I will never say this to you again, even should I see you; but it is true, now and for all time."

Landor turned away from the window and looked at her. It was in human nature that she had never seemed so beautiful before. Perhaps it was, too, because there

was warmth in her face, the stress of life that was more than physical, at last.

It struck him that he was coolly analytical while his wife was reading the love-letter (if that bald statement of fact could be called a love-letter) of another man, and telling him frankly that she returned the man's love. Why could not he have had love, he who had done so much for her? There was always the subconsciousness of that sacrifice. He had magnified it a little, too, and it is difficult to be altogether lovable when one's mental attitude is "see what a good boy am I." But he had never reflected upon that. He went on telling himself what — in all justice to him — he had never thrown up to her, that his life had been one long devotion to her; rather as a principle than as a personality, to be sure, but then — And yet she loved the fellow whom she had not known twenty-four hours in all — a private, a government scout, unnoticeably below her in station. In station, to be sure; but not in birth, after all. It was that again. He was always brought up face to face with her birth. He tried to reason it down, for the hundredth time. It was not her fault, and he had taken her knowingly, chancing that and the consequences of her not loving him. And these were the consequences: that she was sitting rigid before him, staring straight ahead with the pale eyes of suffering, and breathing through trembling lips.

But she would die before she would be faithless to him. He was sure of that. Only — why should he exact so much? Why should he not make the last of

a long score of sacrifices? He had been unselfish with her always, from the day he had found the little child, shy as one of the timid fawns in the woods of the reservation, and pretty in a wild way, until now when she sat there in front of him, a woman, and his wife, loving, and beloved of, another man.

He went and stood beside her and laid his hand upon her hair.

She looked up and tried hard to smile again.

"Poor little girl," he said kindly. He could not help it that they were the words of a compassionate friend, rather than of an injured husband.

She shook her head. "It is the first you have known of it, Jack," she said; "but I have known it for a long while, and I have not been unhappy."

"And you care for him?"

She nodded.

"Are you certain of it? You have seen so very little of him, and you may be mistaken."

If he had had any hope, it vanished before her unhesitating, positive, "No; I am not mistaken. Oh, no!"

He took a chair facing her, as she put the letter back in its envelope and laid it in her work-basket. It was very unlike anything he had ever imagined concerning situations of the sort. But then he was not imaginative. "Should you be glad to be free to marry him?" he asked, in a spirit of unbiassed discussion.

She looked at him in perplexity and surprise. "How could I be? There is no use talking about it."

He hesitated, then blurted it out, in spite of the

inward warning that it would be unwise. "I could let you free yourself."

His glance fell before hers of dismay, disapproval, and anger — an anger so righteous that he felt himself to be altogether in the wrong. "Do you mean *divorce?*" She said it like an unholy word.

He had forgotten that the laws and rites of the Church of Rome had a powerful hold upon her, though she was quite devoid of religious sentiment. He admitted apologetically that he had meant divorce, and she expressed her reproach. In spite of himself and what he felt ought properly to be the tragedy of the affair, he smiled. The humor of her majestic disapproval was irresistible under the circumstances. But she had little sense of humor. "What would you suggest, then, if I may ask?" he said. He had to give up all pathos in the light of her deadly simplicity.

"Nothing," she answered; "I can't see why it should make any difference to you, when it hasn't with me." She had altogether regained the self-possession she had been surprised out of, with an added note of reserve.

And so he had to accept it. He rose, with a slight sigh, and returned to the examination of his spoils.

But when he was away from Felipa and her blighting matter of fact, the pathos of it came uppermost again. Troubles seemed to thicken around him. His voluntary Coventry was making him sensitive. He had thought that his wife was at least giving him the best of her cool nature. Cool! There was no cold-

ness in that strained white face, as she read the letter. The control she had over herself! It was admirable. He thought that most women would have fainted, or have grown hysterical, or have made a scene of some sort. Then he recalled the stoicism of the Apache — and was back at her birth again.

He realized for the first time the injury his thought of it did her. It was that which had kept them apart, no doubt, and the sympathy of lawlessness that had drawn her and Cairness together. Yet he had just begun to flatter himself that he was eradicating the savage. She had been gratifyingly like other women since his return. But it was as Brewster had said, after all, — the Apache strain was abhorrent to him as the venom of a snake. Yet he was fond of Felipa, too.

Someway it had not occurred to him to be any more angry with Cairness than he had been with her. The most he felt was resentful jealousy. There was nothing more underhand about the man than there was about Felipa. Sending the note by the prospectors had not been underhand. He understood that it had been done only that it might make no trouble for her, and give himself no needless pain. Cairness would have been willing to admit to his face that he loved Felipa. That letter must have been written in his own camp.

He heard his wife coming down the stairs, and directly she stood in the doorway. "Will you let me have that knife, Jack dear?" she asked amiably.

He turned his chair and studied her in a kind of hopeless amusement. "Felipa," he said, "if you will insist upon being told, I cut open the pockets of those dead men's clothes with it."

"But I can have it cleaned," she said.

He turned back abruptly. "You had better get another. You can't have that one," he answered.

Was it possible that twenty minutes before he had risen to the histrionic pitch of self-sacrifice of offering her her freedom to marry another man?

XII

It was unfortunate for Landor, as most things seemed to be just then, that the Department Commander happened to have an old score to settle. It resulted in the charges preferred by Brewster being given precedence over the request for a court of inquiry. The Department Commander was a man of military knowledge, and he foresaw that the stigma of having been court-martialled for cowardice would cling to Landor through all his future career, whatever the findings of the court might be. An officer is in the position of the wife of Cæsar, and it is better for him, much better, that the charge of "unsoldierly and unofficer-like conduct, in violation of the sixty-first article of war," should never come up against him, however unfounded it may be.

It was a very poor case, indeed, that Brewster made out, despite a formidable array of specifications. As it progressed, the situation took on a certain ludicrousness. The tale of woe was so very trivial; it seemed hardly worth the trouble of convening twelve officers from the four corners of the Department to hear it. And there was about Brewster, as he progressed, a suggestion of dragging one foot after the other, leaving out a word here, overlooking an occurrence there, cut-

ting off a mile in one place, and tacking on an hour in another.

Landor's wrath was mighty, but he smiled as he sat balancing a ruler on his fingers and hearing how the citizens of San Tomaso, eager to avenge their wrongs, had met him at early morning, had gone bravely forward, keen on the scent, had implored him to hasten, while he halted on worthless pretexts, and had, towards evening, reluctantly left a hot trail, going from it at right angles, "and camping," said Brewster, regretfully, "as far away as it was possible to get, considering the halts."

At one moment it appeared that Landor had given his command into the hands of the citizens, at another that he had flatly refused to follow them into danger, that he had threatened and hung back by turns, and had, in short, made himself the laughing-stock of civilians and enlisted men, by what Brewster called "his timid subterfuges."

Yet somehow "timid subterfuges" seemed hardly the words to fit with the hard, unswerving eye and the deep-lined face of the accused. It struck the court so. There were other things that struck the court, notably that Brewster had criticised his captain to civilians and to enlisted men. The Judge Advocate frowned. The frown settled to a permanency when Brewster sought out that honorable personage to complain, unofficially, that his case was being neglected. It was about upon a par with an accusation of bribery against a supreme judge in civil life, and naturally did not do the plain-

tiff much good when the Judge Advocate rose, terrible in his indignation, to repeat the complaint officially to the assembled court at the next sitting. The court was resentful. It listened and weighed for six days, and then it acquitted Landor on every charge and specification "most honorably," to make it more strong, and afterward went over, in a body, to his quarters, to congratulate him. The rest of the post followed.

Landor was in the dining room, and Felipa stood in the sitting room receiving the praises of her husband with much tact. If he were the hero of the hour, she was the heroine. The officers from far posts carried their admiration to extravagance, bewitched by the sphinx-riddle written somehow on her fair face, and which is the most potent and bewildering charm a woman can possess. When they went away, they sent her boxes of fresh tomatoes and celery and lemons, from points along the railroad, which was a highly acceptable and altogether delicate attention in the day and place.

The garrison gave a hop in her honor and Landor's. It was quite an affair, as many as five and thirty souls being present, and it was written up in the *Army and Navy* afterward. The correspondent went into many adjectives over Mrs. Landor, and her fame spread through the land.

Brewster stood in his own window, quite alone, and watched them all crowding down to Landor's quarters. The beauty of the Triumph of Virtue did not appeal to

him. He was very uneasy. Countercharges were looming on his view. To be sure, he had not lied, not absolutely and in so many words, but his citizen witnesses had not been so adroit or so careful. It would not have taken much to make out a very fair case of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. Practical working texts, anent looking before leaping, and being sure you are right ere going ahead, occurred to him with new force. His morality at the moment was worthy the law and the prophets. He was Experience in person, and as such would have been an invaluable teacher, if there had been any seeking instruction. But there was none. They were all with Landor, drinking his wine and helping success succeed, than which one may find less pleasant occupations.

Yet there came a rap at his door directly. It was the McLane's striker, bearing a note from Miss McLane. Brewster knew what was in it before he opened it. But he went back to the window and read it by the fading light. When he looked up it was to see Miss McLane and Ellton going up the walk together, returning from Landor's house.

And at another window Felipa also stood looking out into the dusk. There had been a shower in the afternoon, and the clouds it had left behind were like a soft moss of fire floating in the sky. A bright golden light struck slantwise from the sunset. They had all gone away to dine and to dress for the hop; Landor had walked down to the post trader's for the mail, and she was left alone.

She watched the figure of a man coming down the line. Because of the dazzling, low light behind him, the outline was blurred in a shimmer. At first she thought without any interest in it, one way or another, that he was a soldier, then she could see that he was in citizen's clothes and wore a sombrero and top boots. Even with that, until he was almost in front of the house, she did not realize that it was Cairness, though she knew well enough that he was in the post, and had been one of Landor's most valuable witnesses. He had remained to hear the findings, but she had kept close to the house and had not seen him before. He was a government scout, a cow-boy, a prospector, reputed a squaw-man, anything vagrant and unsettled, and so the most he might do was to turn his head as he passed by, and looking up at the windows, bow gravely to the woman standing dark against the firelight within.

The blaze of glory had gone suddenly from the clouds, leaving them lifeless gray, when she turned her eyes back to them ; and the outlook across the parade ground was very bare. She went and stood by the fire, leaning her arm on the mantel-shelf and setting her determined lips.

Three weeks later she left the post and the West. Landor's health was broken from the effects of the poisonweed and the manifold troubles of the months past. In lieu of sick leave, he was given a desirable detail, and sent on to Washington, and for a year and a half he saw his wife fitted into a woman's seemly sphere. She was heralded as a beauty, and made much

of as such, and the little vanities that had rarely shown before came to the surface now. He was proud of her. Sought after and admired, clothed in purple and scarlet and fine linen, within the limits of a captain's pay, a creature of ultra-civilization, tamed, she was a very charming woman indeed. There seemed to be no hint of the Apache left. He all but forgot it himself. There was but one relapse in all the time, and it chanced that he had no knowledge of that.

Yet, in the midst of her little triumph, Felipa fell ill, failing without apparent cause, and then the uneasiness that had only slept in Landor for eighteen months came awake again. He did not believe when the doctors told him that it was the lassitude of the moist, warm springtime which was making the gray circles about her eyes, the listlessness of her movements.

When she lay, one day, with her face, too white and sharp, looking out from the tangle of hair upon the pillow, he asked her almost abruptly if she had rather go back to the West. He could not bring himself to ask if she were longing to be near Cairness. He shrank too much from her frank, unhesitating assent.

The face on the pillow lighted quickly, and she put out her hand to him impulsively. "Could we go back, Jack, even before the detail is up?" she said. And yet her life of late had surely been one that women would have thought enviable — most women.

He himself had never dreamed how it irked her until now. It was many years since he had been in the East, not, indeed, since Felipa had been a small child.

Keeping his promise to Cabot, as he understood it, had left him little for such pleasures as that. But he had done his duty then; he would do it again, and reap once more what seemed to him the inevitable reward, the reward which had been his all through his life,—sheer disappointment, in all he prized most, ashes and dust.

"I can throw up the detail," he said indifferently, "I dare say I might as well. There is only half a year more of it. Some one will be glad enough to take that."

"But you," said Felipa, wistfully, "you do not want to go back?"

For a moment he stood looking straight into her eyes, yet neither read the other's thoughts. Then he turned away with a baffled half laugh. "Why should it matter to me?" he asked.

XIII

Cairness rode at a walk round and round the crowding, snorting, restless herd of cattle that was gathered together in the pocket of the foot-hills under the night sky. There were five other cow-boys who also rode round and round, but they were each several hundred yards apart, and he was, to all intents, alone. Now and then he quickened the gait of his bronco and headed off some long-horned steer or heifer, that forced itself out of the huddled, dark mass, making a break for freedom. But for the most part he rode heavily, lopsided in his saddle, resting both hands on the high pommel. He had had time to unlearn the neat horsemanship of the service, and to fall into the slouchy manner of the cowboy, skilful but unscientific. It was a pitchy night, in spite of the stars, but in the distance, far off across the velvety roll of the hills, there was a forest fire on the top of a range of mountains. It glowed against the sky and lighted the pocket and the prairie below, making strange shadows among the cattle, or bringing into shining relief here and there a pair of mighty horns. A wind, dry and hot, blew down from the flames, and made the herd uneasy.

Not far from where those flames were licking up into the heavens, Cairness thought as he watched them, had

been the Circle K Ranch. In among the herd, even now, were Circle K cattle that had not yet been cut out. Those six people of his own race had been all that was left to him of his youth. To be sure, he had seen little of them, but he had known that they were there, ready to receive him in the name of the home they had all left behind.

And since that gray dawn when he had picked his way through the ashes and charred logs, and had bent over the bodies of his friend and the dead mother and the two children, he had been possessed by a loathing that was almost physical repulsion for all Indians. That was why he had left the stone cabin he had built for himself in the White Mountains, forsaking it and the Apaches who had been, in a way, his friends. But he had done it, too, with the feeling that now he had nowhere to lay his head ; that he was driven from pillar to post, buffeted and chased ; that he was cursed with the curse of the wanderer. If it had not been that he had an indefinite theory of his own concerning the Kirby massacre, as it was known throughout the country, and that he meant to, some day, in some way, avenge it upon the whites who had abandoned them to their fate, he would have killed himself. He had been very near it once, and had sat on the edge of his bunk in the cabin with a revolver in his hand, thinking it all out for an entire evening, before deciding dispassionately against it. He was not desperate, merely utterly careless of life, which is much worse. Desperation is at the most the keen agony of torture at the stake; but indif-

ference toward all that is held by this world, or the next, is dying in a gradual vacuum.

He believed that he had no ties now, that friendships, the love of woman, and the kiss of children all had missed him, and that his, thenceforth, must be but vain regret. So far as he knew, Felipa had gone away without ever having received his letter. The man he had intrusted it to had been killed in the Aravaypa Cañon : that he was certain of ; and it never entered his head that his papers might have fallen into other hands, and the note have finally been delivered to her. She was leading the sort of life that would most quickly put him entirely out of her mind. He was taking the Washington papers, and he knew. She had gone away, not even sure that he had given her a thought since the night in the Sierra Blanca when Black River had roared through the stillness, and they had been alone in all the wild world. What a weird, mysterious, unearthly scene it had been, quite outside the probabilities of anything he had imagined or contemplated for a single minute. He had never regretted it, though. He believed in impulses, particularly his own.

Two steers, locking their horns, broke from the herd and swaying an instant so, separated and started side by side across the prairie. He settled in his saddle and put his cow-pony to a run, without any preliminary gait, going in a wide circle to head them back. Running across the ground, thick with coyote and dog holes, was decidedly perilous ; men had their necks

broken in that way every few days; but it would not have mattered to him especially to have ended so. Wherefore he did not, but drove the steers back to the herd safely. And then he returned to the monotonous sentry work and continued thinking of himself.

What had he done with four and thirty years, putting it at the very highest valuation? He had sunk so far below the standard of his youth that he would not be fit for his old companions, even if he had wanted to go back to them, which, except in certain fits of depression, he did not. His own mother cared very little what became of him. At Christmas time she always sent him a letter, which reached him much later, as a rule, and he answered it. His brothers had forgotten him. His sister, of whom he had been very fond once, and for whom he had hoped a great deal, had married well enough and gone to London; but she, too, had forgotten him long since.

So much for his past. As for his present. His only friends were treacherous savages and some few settlers and cow-boys. They would none of them miss him if he were to be laid under a pile of stones with a board cross at his head anywhere by the roadside, in the plains or among the hills. Some of them were honest men, some were desperadoes; none were his equals, not one understood the things that meant life to him. He had no abode, not so much as the coyote over there on the top of the little swell. He made his living in divers and uncertain ways. Sometimes he sent pictures to the East, studies of the things about him.

They sold well. Sometimes he was a scout or a guide. Sometimes he prospected and located claims with more or less good luck. Sometimes he hired himself out as a cow-boy at round-ups, as he was doing now. On the whole, he was, from the financial standpoint, more of a success than from any other.

Also he was in love with the wife of a man he liked and respected — and who trusted him. Yet in spite of that, he had come near — so near that it made him cold to think about it — to following in the way of many frontiersmen and marrying a Mexican. It had been when he had first learned that Felipa Landor had gone East for two years; and the Mexican had been very young and very pretty, also very bad.

It was not a nice outlook. But he found it did not grow any better for the thought that Felipa might have forgotten all about him, though that would unquestionably have been the best thing that could have happened for all concerned, from the standpoint of common sense. But there were two chances, of a sort, that made it worth while worrying along. One was that Felipa might some day, in the working out of things, come into his life. The other was that he could ferret out the truth of the Kirby massacre. Love and revenge are mighty stimulants.

As for the Kirby affair, there had been no hint of treachery in the published or verbal accounts of it. The ranch hands who had escaped had told a plain enough tale of having fled at the approach of the Indians, vainly imploring the Kirbys to do the same. It

seemed that the most they could be accused of was cowardice. It had all been set forth in the papers with much circumstance and detail. But Cairness doubted. He remembered their dogged ugliness, and that of the raw-boned Texan woman.

That very day the doubt had attained the proportions of a certainty. The sight of a Circle K cow had called up the subject of the massacre, and a cow-boy had said, "Them are the property of Bill Lawton, I reckon."

Cairness asked who Bill Lawton might be, and was told that he had been one of the Kirby men, "Big fellow with a big wife. If you was ever there, you'd ought to remember her. She was a Venus and a Cleopatrer rolled into one, you bet." The cow-boy was not devoid of lore for all his lowly station.

Cairness did remember, but he did not see fit to say so.

A half dozen cow-boys came riding over from the camp of the outfit to relieve those on duty. Cairness was worn out with close on eighteen hours in the saddle, tearing and darting over the hills and ravines, quick as the shadow from some buzzard high in the sky, scrambling over rocks, cutting, wheeling, chasing after fleet-footed, scrawny cattle. He went back to camp, and without so much as washing the caked dust and sweat from his face, rolled himself in a blanket and slept.

The round-up lasted several days longer, and then the men were paid off, and went their way. The way

of most was toward Tombstone, because the opportunities for a spree were particularly fine there. Not because of these, but because the little parson lived there now, Cairness went also. Moreover, it was as good a place as another to learn more about the massacre. Cow-boys coming from other round-ups and getting drunk might talk.

The famous mining town was two years old. It had ceased to be a "wind city" or even a canvas one, and was settling down to the dignity of adobe, or even boards, having come to stay. But it was far too new, too American, to have any of the picturesqueness of the Mexican settlements of the country.

Cairness tied his cow-pony to a post in front of a low calcimined adobe, and going across the patch of trodden earth knocked at the door. The little parson's own high voice called to him, and he went in.

The Reverend Taylor was tipped back in his chair with his feet upon the table, reading the Tucson papers. He sprang up and put out his hand in a delighted welcome, his small face turning into a very chart of smiling seams and wrinkles.

But his left hand hung misshapen, and Cairness saw that it did not bend at the wrist as he motioned to an empty soda-pop bottle and a glass on the table beside a saucer of fly-paper and water. "That's what I still take, you see," he said, "but I'll serve you better;" and he opened a drawer and brought out a big flask. "I reckon you've got a thirst on you this hot weather." He treated himself to a second bottle of the pop, and

grew loquacious, as another man might have under the influence of stronger drink; and he talked so much about himself and so little about his guest that Cairness wondered. Presently the reason made itself manifest. It was the egotism of the lover. The Reverend Taylor was going to be married. He told Cairness so with an expression of beatitude that answered to a blush, and pointed to a photograph on his mantel-shelf. "She ain't so pretty to look at," he confided, which was undoubtedly true, "nor yet so young. But I ain't neither, 'sfar as that goes. She's amiable. That's the great thing after all, for a wife. She's amiable."

Cairness congratulated him with all solemnity, and asked if she were a widow. He was sure she must be, for the gallantry of the West in those days allowed no woman to pass maturity unwed.

But she was, it appeared, a maiden lady, straight from Virginia. The Reverend Taylor was the first man she had ever loved. "It was right funny how it come about," he confided, self absorbed still. "Her mother keeps the res'rant acrost the street where I take my meals (I used to have a Greaser woman, but I got sick of *frijoles* and *gorditas* and *chili* and all that stuff), and after dinner every afternoon, she and me would put two saucers of fly-paper on a table and we would set and bet on which would catch the most flies before four o'clock. You ain't no idea how interestin' it got to be. The way we watched them flies was certainly intense. Sometimes, I tell you, she'd get that excited she'd scream when they couldn't make up their minds to

light. Once her mother come runnin' in, thinkin' I was tryin' to kiss her." He beamed upon Cairness, and accepted congratulations charmingly, sipping his soda-pop with quite a rakish little air. "What brought you here?" he remembered to ask, at length.

Cairness told him that he had been in the 3 C round-up, and then went on to his point. "Taylor, see here. I want to find out more about the Kirby massacre. There is more to that than has appeared in print."

The minister nodded his head. "Yes, I reckon there is," he agreed.

"You remember that woman," Cairness went on, making and rolling adroitly a straw-paper cigarette, "the one who was cook on the ranch for so long? She could tell us what it is, and I'll bet on it."

The Reverend Taylor nodded again. "Reckon she could. But —" he grabbed at a fly with one hand, and caught and crushed it in his palm with much dexterity, "but — she's lit out."

"So?" said Cairness, with the appearance of stolidity he invariably assumed to cover disappointment or any sort of approach to emotion. "Where's she gone to?"

Taylor shrugged his shoulders. "*Quien sabe?* Can't prove it by me. Just *vamoosed*. Fell in love with a little terrier of a Greaser half her size, and cleaned out. Lawton was in here a day or two ago, lookin' for her and raisin' particular Cain with whiskey and six-shooters — bawlin' about her all over the place."

"Is he here now?"

He had gone back.

Cairness made another cigarette and considered. "I think I'll hire to him," he said, after a while.

"Hire to him!" exclaimed Taylor, "what for?"

"For the fun of it, and 'found.' Can you give me a recommendation?"

The parson said that he could not. "Lawton ain't any use for me. I guess it's because he remembers me, that's why. He'll remember you, too."

"No," said Cairness, "he won't. I've met him since. That was a long time ago, and I was smooth shaven."

Taylor smiled. Cairness's small, brown mustache, curving up at the ends, was hardly a disguise. "There's a fellow here who could get you the job, though," he suggested. "Fellow named Stone. Newspaper man, used to be in Tucson. He seems to have some sort of pull with that Lawton fellow."

"I know him," Cairness said; "he used to be round San Carlos when I was an enlisted man. He won't remember me, either. And you needn't necessarily mention that I was with Landor in the San Tomaso affair, or that I was a scout. He may know it, of course. And again, he may not."

He got up and went to the window, which was iron-barred, after the Mexican fashion, and stood, with his hands run into his belt, looking down at a row of struggling, scraggly geraniums in tin cans. They were the most disheartening part of the whole disheartening prospect, within or without.

The Reverend Taylor got his hat. It was still a silk one, but new, and without holes. They went over to the false front board structure which was Stone's office. It appeared from the newspaper man's greeting that it was a case of the meeting of prominent citizens. Taylor presented Cairness, with the elegant, rhetorical flourishes he was capable of when he chose. "He is a friend of mine," he added, "and anything that you can do for him will be appreciated, you *sabe?* —" Stone did understand, and Taylor left them alone together.

They opened upon non-committal topics: the weather, which had been scorching and parched since April, and would continue so, in all probability, until September; the consequent condition of the crops, which was a figure of speech, for there were none, and never had been, deserving of the name; and then Cairness, having plenty of time, brought it round to the troops. In the tirade that followed he recognized a good many of the sentiments, verbatim, of the articles in the Tucson papers of the time of Landor's scout. But he half shut his eyes and listened, pulling at the small, brown mustache. Stone set him down, straightway, as an ass, or English, which was much the same thing.

Cairness was still in his dust-grayed outfit, his hair was below where his collar would have been had he been wearing one, and his nose was on its way to at least the twentieth new skin that summer. In all his years of the frontier, he had never become too well tanned to burn. His appearance was not altogether reassuring, Stone thought. He was not only an ass, he

was also tough — the sort of a fellow with whom it was as well to remember that your six-shooter is beneath the last copy of your paper, on the desk at your elbow.

"I have never especially liked you," Cairness decided, for his part, "and I can't say that you improve upon acquaintance, you know. You wrote those articles about Landor, and that's one I owe you."

Stone wore his oratory out after a time, and Cairness closed his eyes rather more, to the end that he might look a yet greater ass, and said that he wanted to hire out as a cow-boy or ranch hand of some sort. "Taylor told me you knew a fellow named Lawton, I think it was. Would he be wanting one now?" He took considerable satisfaction in his own histrionic ability, and lapsed into the phraseology of the job-hunter.

Stone thought not. He had not heard Lawton speak of needing help. But he wrote a very guarded note of recommendation, falling back into the editorial habit, and dashing it off under pressure. Cairness, whose own writing was tiny and clear and black, and who covered whole sheets without apparent labor, but with lightning rapidity, watched and reflected that he spent an amount of time on the flourish of his signature that might have been employed to advantage in the attainment of legibility.

"I'm a busy man," said Stone, "a very busy man, the busiest man in the territory."

No one in the territory was busy. The atmosphere was still too much that of the Mexican possession; but Cairness said it was undoubtedly so, and took his leave,

clanking his spurs, heavy footed, and stooping his long form, in continuance of the rôle of ass. He knew well enough that he had been so summed up. It is a disadvantage the British citizen labors under in the West.

The next day he left for the Circle K Ranch. Lawton did not appear to need help. But he fired a Greaser, nevertheless, and took Cairness on. He seemed to stand in as abject awe of Stone's note as an Arab might have stood of a bit of the black covering of the Kaabah stone.

And Cairness stayed with him, serving seven months, and seeking what he might discover. But he discovered nothing more than that the Circle K Ranch, for all that it might be the Texan's in name, was Stone's in point of fact, and that Lawton's dread of that mighty man was very much greater than his hope of heaven.

The knowledge was slight and of no plain value; but it might be of use some day. Life had taught Cairness, amongst other things, that it usually proved so. He stored it away with the other gleanings of experience in his mental barns, and went in search of new adventures.

XIV

THE chief Alchise and a half hundred of his kind — one so deaf that he held to his savage old ear a civilized speaking-trumpet — squatted about on the ground, and explained to Crook the nature of their wrongs.

"We were planting our own corn and melons," said Alchise, "and making our own living. The agent at San Carlos never gave us any rations, but we didn't mind about that. We were taking care of ourselves. One day the agent — " He stopped and scowled at a squaw a few yards away, whose papoose was crying lustily. The squaw, having her attention thus called to the uproar of her offspring, drew from somewhere in the folds of her dirty wrappings a nursing-bottle, and putting the nipple in its mouth, hushed its cries. The chief went on: "One day the agent sent up and said that we must give up our own country and our corn patches, and go down there to the Agency to live. He sent Indian soldiers to seize our women and children, and drive us down to the hot land."

He was a simple, sullen Apache, and his untutored mind could only grasp effects. Causes were beyond it. He did not, therefore, understand that coal had been discovered on his reservation, also silver, and that the agent and the agent's friends were trying to possess

themselves of the land in order to dispose of it to the Eastern capitalist.

He knew that his cattle were driven off by the white cow-boys and could not be gotten back, that he was given but one cup of flour every seven days, that beef was so difficult to obtain that it practically formed no part of his diet; but he did not know of the "boys" in Tucson and officials in Washington who were profiting from the sale of Indian supplies to white squatters.

He knew that the stores which should have gone to him were loaded upon wagon-trains and hurried off the reservation in the dead of night; but he did not know why the Apache who was sent to humbly ask the agent about it was put in the guard-house for six months without trial. He knew that his corn patches were trampled down, but not that it was to force him to purchase supplies from the agent and his friends, or else get out. He knew that his reservation — none too large, as it was, for three thousand adults more or less — had been cut down without his consent five different times, and that Mormon settlers were elbowing him out of what space remained. But, being only a savage, it were foolish to expect that he should have seen the reason for these things. He has not yet learned to take kindly to financial dishonesty. Does he owe you two bits, he will travel two hundred miles to pay it. He has still much to absorb concerning civilization.

Another thing he could not quite fathom was why the religious dances he had, in pursuance of his wild

pleasure, seen fit to hold on Cibicu Creek, had been interfered with by the troops. To be sure, the dances had been devised by his medicine men to raise the dead chiefs and braves with the end in view of re-peopling the world with Apaches and driving out the Whites. But as the dead had not consented to the raising, it might have been as well to allow the Indians to become convinced of the futility of it in that way. However, the government thought otherwise, and sent its troops.

Because they were sent, a fine officer had fallen victim to Apache treachery of the meanest sort and to the gross stupidity of others, and Arizona was on the verge of the worst disorder of all its disorderly history. So Crook was sent for, and he came at once, and looked with his small, piercing eyes, and listened with his ears so sharp to catch the ring of untruth, and learned a pretty tale of what had gone on during his absence on the troubled northern plains.

A great many delightful facts, illustrative of the rule of the Anglo-Saxon in for gain, came to his knowledge. There were good men and just in Arizona, and some of these composed the Federal Grand Jury, which reported on the condition of affairs at the Agency. When a territorial citizen had anything to say in favor of the Redskin, it might be accepted as true. And these jurymen said that the happenings on the San Carlos Agency had been a disgrace to the age and a foul blot upon the national escutcheon. They waxed very wroth and scathing as they dwelt upon how the

agent's vast power made almost any crime possible. There was no check upon his conduct, nor upon the wealth he could steal from a blind government; and to him, and such as him, they attributed the desolation and bloodshed which had dotted the plains with the graves of murdered victims. It was the rather unavailing wail of the honest citizen caught between the upper and nether millstones of the politician and the hostile.

Crook had been recalled too late, and he knew it. Every Apache on the reservation was ready for the war-path. It was not to be averted. One man, even a very firm and deft one, could not straighten out in a few weeks the muddle of ten years of thievery, oppression, and goading. It takes more than just a promise, even though it is one likely to be kept, to soothe the hurt feelings of savages who have seen eleven of their friends jailed for fourteen months without the form of accusation or trial. They feel bitter toward the government whose minions do those things.

The new general was hailed by the territories as deliverer until he found the truth and told it, after which they called him all manner of hard names, for that is the sure reward of the seeker after fact. He prepared for war, seeing how things were, but he tried for peace the while. He sent to the bucks who lurked in the fastnesses and strongholds, and said that he was going out alone to see them. He left his troops and pack-train, and with two interpreters and two officers repaired to the cañon of the Black River, where he scrambled and slid, leading his scrambling,

sliding mule down the precipices of basalt and lava among the pines and junipers.

Bright, black eyes peered down from crevasses and branches. An Apache lurked behind every boulder and trunk. But only the squaws and the children and twenty-six bucks in war toilet, naked from shoulder to waist, painted with blood and mescal, rings in their noses, and heads caked thick with mud, came down to the conference.

It was not of much avail in the end, the conference. There was more than one tribe to be pacified. The restlessness of the wild things, of the goaded, and of the spring was in their blood.

The last straw was laid on when an Indian policeman arrested a young buck for some small offence. The buck tried to run away, and would not halt when he was told to. The chief of police fired and killed a squaw by mistake; and though he was properly sorry for it, and expressed his regret, the relatives and friends of the deceased squaw caught him a few days later, and cutting off his head, kicked it round, as they had seen the White-eye soldier do with his rubber foot-ball. Then they, aroused and afraid too of punishment, fled from the reservation and began to kill.

It was a halcyon time for the press. It approved and it disapproved, while the troops went serenely on their way. It gave the government two courses, — removal of the Apaches, one and all, to the Indian territory (as feasible as driving the oxen of Geryon), or extermination — the catchword of the non-combatant.

The government took neither course.

There was but one other resort. The exasperated, impotent press turned to it. "If the emergency should arise, and it now looks as though it may come soon," flowed the editorial ink, "enough resolute and courageous men can be mustered in Tombstone, Globe, Tucson, and other towns and settlements to settle the question, once and forever: to settle it as such questions have often been settled before."

In pursuance of which the resolute and courageous men arose at the cry of their bleeding land. They have gone down to history (to such history as deigns to concern itself with the reclaiming of the plains of the wilderness, in area an empire of itself) as the Tombstone Toughs.

The exceedingly small respectable element of Tombstone hailed their departure with unmixed joy. They had but one wish, — that the Toughs might meet the Apaches, and that each might rid the face of the desert of the other. But the only Apaches left to meet were the old and feeble, and the squaws and papooses left at San Carlos. The able-bodied bucks were all in the field, as scouts or hostiles.

The resolute and courageous men, led by a resolute and courageous saloon-keeper, found one old Indian living at peace upon his rancheria. They fired at him and ran away. The women and children of the settlers were left to bear the brunt of the anger of the Apaches. It was too much for even the Tucson journalist. He turned from denunciation of the mili-

tary, for one moment, and applied his vigorous adjectives to the Tombstone Toughs.

Arizona had its full share of murder and sudden death. But New Mexico had more than that. Spring passed on there, with warmth for the snow-wrapped mountains, and blistering heat for the dead plains, and her way was marked with lifeless and mutilated forms.

Landor's troop was stationed at Stanton, high up among the hills. It had come there from another post down in the southern part of the territory, where anything above the hundreds is average temperature, and had struck a blizzard on its march.

Once when Felipa got out of the ambulance to tramp beside it, in the stinging snow whirls, and to start the thin blood in her veins, she had looked up into his blanket-swathed face, and laughed. "I wonder if you looked like that when you took me through this part of the world twenty years ago," she said.

He did not answer, and she knew that he was annoyed. She had come to see that he was always annoyed by such references, and she made them more frequent for that very reason, half in perversity, half in a fixed determination not to be ashamed of her origin, for she felt, without quite realizing it, that to come to have shame and contempt for herself would be to lose every hold upon life.

She was happier than she had been in Washington. Landor saw that, but he refused to see that she was

also better. However much a man may admire, in the abstract, woman as a fine natural animal, unspoiled by social pettiness, he does not fancy the thing in his wife. From the artistic standpoint, a regal barbarian, unconfined, with her virtue and her vices on a big scale, is very well ; from the domestic, it is different. She is more suitable in the garb of fashion, with home-made character of parlor-ornament proportions.

Felipa had discarded, long since, the short skirt and moccasins of her girlhood, and had displayed no inconsiderable aptitude in the matter of fashions; but she was given to looseness of draperies and a carelessness of attire in her own home that the picturesqueness of her beauty alone only saved from slatternliness. There was one manifestation of ill taste which she did not give, however, one common enough with the wives of most of the officers. She was never to be found running about the post, or sitting upon the porches, with her husband's cape around her shoulders and his forage-cap over her eyes. Her instinct for the becoming was unfailing. This was a satisfaction to Landor. But it was a secret grievance that she was most contented when in her riding habit, tearing foolhardily over the country.

Another grievance was the Ellton baby. Felipa adored it, and for no reason that he could formulate, he did not wish her to. He wanted a child of his own. Altogether he was not so easy to get on with as he had been. She did not see why. Being altogether sweet-humored and cheerful herself, she looked

for sweet humor and cheerfulness in him, and was more and more often disappointed. Not that he was ever once guilty of even a quick burst of ill temper. It would have been a relief.

Sometimes when she was quite certain of being undisturbed, she took Cairness's one letter from the desk, and read and reread it, and went over every word and look she had had from him. She had forgotten nothing, but though her olive skin would burn and then grow more colorless than ever when she allowed herself to recall, not even a sigh would come from between the lips that had grown a very little set.

Yet she not only loved Cairness as much as ever, but more. Her church had the strong hold of superstition upon her, but she might have thrown it off, grown reckless of enforced conventions, and have gone to him, had not faithfulness and gratitude held her yet more powerfully.

Landor had been good to her. She would have gone through anything rather than have hurt him. And yet it was always a relief now when he went away. She was glad when he was ordered into the field at the beginning of the spring. Of old she had been sufficiently sorry to have him go. But of old she had not felt the bit galling.

Life went on very much the same at the post when there was only the infantry left in possession. As there was nothing to do at any time, there was nothing the less for that. On the principle that loneliness is greatest in a crowd, Stanton was more isolated now

than Grant had been in the days when there had been no railroad west of Kansas. The railroad was through the southwest now, but it was a hundred miles away. It was unsafe to ride outside the reservation, there was no one for hops, the only excitement was the daily addition to the list of slaughtered settlers. Felipa spent most of her time with the Ellton baby. Miss McLane had been married to Landor's second lieutenant for a year and a half, and they were very happy. But Felipa in the knowledge of the strength of her own love, which gained new might each time that she wrestled with it and threw it back upon the solid ground of duty, found their affection decidedly insipid. Like the majority of marital attachments, it had no especial dignity. It was neither the steadfast friendship she felt for her husband, nor the absolute devotion she would have given Cairness.

But the baby was satisfactory. She amused it by the hour. For the rest, being far from gregarious, and in no way given to spending all the morning on some one else's front porch, and all the afternoon with some one else upon her own, she drew on the post library and read, or else sat and watched the mountains with their sharp, changing shadows by day, and their Indian signal flashes by night, — which did not tend to enhance the small degree of popularity she enjoyed among the post women.

Some thirty miles to the southeast was the Mescalero Indian Agency. Landor had consented with the worst possible grace to take her there sometime when the

road should be passable and safe. She had openly resented his disinclination, though she usually appeared not to notice it. "It is very natural I should want to see the place where I was born," she had said, "and I think we should both be more comfortable if you would not persist in being so ashamed of it."

The story of her origin was an open secret now. Landor had never been able to discover who had spread it. The probabilities were, however, that it had been Brewster. He had been suspended for a year after Landor's trial, and driven forth with contempt, but he was back again, with a bold front, and insinuating and toadying himself into public favor, destined by that Providence which sometimes arouses itself to reward and punish before the sight of all men, to be short-lived.

XV

Landor sat at the centre table and went over requisition blanks by the light of a green-shaded student lamp. The reflection made him look livid and aging. Felipa had noticed it, and then she had turned to the fire and sat watching, with her soft eyes half closed, the little sputtering sparks from the mesquite knot. She had been immovable in that one position for at least an hour, her hands folded with a weary looseness in her lap. If it had not been that her face was very hard to read, even her husband might have guessed that she was sad. But he was not thinking about her. He went on examining the papers until some one came upon the front porch and knocked at the door. Then he got up and went out.

It was the post-trader, he told Felipa when he came back, and he was asking for help from the officer-of-the-day. Some citizens down at the store were gambling and drinking high, and were becoming uproarious.

Landor sent for a squad of the guard and went to put them out. It was just one of the small emergencies that go to make up the chances of peace. He might or he might not come back alive; the probabilities in favor of the former, to be sure. But the risks are

about equal whether one fights Indians or citizens drunk with liquor and gaming.

The men went away, however, without much trouble beyond tipsy protests and mutterings, and the sutler rewarded the guard with beer, and explained to Landor that several of the disturbers were fellows who were hanging round the post for the beef contract; the biggest and most belligerent — he of the fierce, drooping mustachios — was the owner of the ranch where the Kirby massacre had taken place, as well as of another one in New Mexico.

Landor paid very little attention just then, but that same night he had occasion to think of it again.

It was his habit to go to bed directly after taps when he was officer-of-the-day, and to visit the guard immediately before reveille the next morning. But the requisitions and some troop papers kept him until almost twelve, so that he decided to make his rounds as soon as the clock had struck twelve, and to sleep until sunrise. Felipa had long since gone off to bed. He turned down the lamp, put on his cape and cap, and with his revolver in his pocket and his sabre clicking a monotonous accompaniment went out into the night.

It was not very dark. The sky was thick with clouds, but there was a waning moon behind them. The only light in the garrison was in the grated windows of the guard-house.

Visiting the guard is dull work, and precisely the same round, night after night, with hardly ever a variation. But to-night there occurred a slight one.

Landor was carrying his sabre in his arm, as he went by the back of the quarters, in order that its jingle might not disturb any sleepers. For the same reason he walked lightly, although, indeed, he was usually soft-footed, and came unheard back of Brewster's yard. Brewster himself was standing in the shadow of the fence, talking to some man. Landor could see that it was a big fellow, and the first thing that flashed into his mind, without any especial reason, was that it was the rancher who had been in trouble down at the sutler's store.

It gave cause for reflection; but an officer was obviously at liberty to talk to whomsoever he might choose around his own premises, at any hour of the day or night. So the officer of the day went on, treading quietly. But he had something to think about now that kept off drowsiness for the rest of the rounds. Brewster's fondness for the society of dubious civilians was certainly unfortunate. And the conjunction of the aspiring beef contractor and the commissary officer was also unfortunate, not to say curious. Because of this. The beef contract was about to expire, and the commandant had advertised for bids. A number of ranchers had already turned their papers in. Furnishing the government's soldiers with meat is never an empty honor.

The bids, duly sealed, were given into the keeping of the commissary officer to be put in his safe, and kept until the day of judgment, when all being opened in public and in the presence of the aspirants, the lowest would

get the contract. It was a simple plan, and gave no more opportunity for underhand work than could be avoided. But there were opportunities for all that. It was barely possible — the thing had been done — for a commissary clerk or sergeant, desirous of adding to his pittance of pay, or of favoring a friend among the bidders, to tamper with the bids. By the same token there was no real reason why the commissary officer could not do it himself. Landor had never heard, or known, of such a case, but undoubtedly the way was there. It was a question of having the will and the possession of the safe keys.

There were only the bids to be taken out and steamed open. The lowest found, it was simple enough for the favored one to make his own a quarter of a cent less, and to turn it in at the last moment. But one drawback presented itself. Some guileful and wary contractors, making assurance twice sure, kept their bids themselves and only presented them when the officers sat for the final awarding. Certainly Brewster would have been wiser not to have been seen with the big civilian. During the two days that elapsed before the awarding of the contract, Landor thought about it most of the time.

It came to pass in the working out of things that the commandant elected to spend the night before the opening of the bids, in the small town some miles away, where one of the first families was giving a dinner. This left Landor, as next in rank, in temporary command. It had happened often enough before, in one way

or another, but this time the duties of the position seemed to weigh upon him. He was restless and did not care to sleep. He sent Felipa off to bed, and sat watching where her lithe young figure had gone out of the door for some minutes. Then he ran his hand across his mouth contemplatively, stroked his mustache, and finally went out of the house and down to Ellton's quarters.

When the baby began to cry, as it was always quite sure to do sooner or later, and Mrs. Ellton went up to it, Landor spoke. "If I should come for you at any hour to-night, I wish you would hold yourself in readiness to go out with me immediately."

He was not the sort of a man of whom to ask explanations. Ellton said "Very well," and proceeded to talk about the troop's hogs and gardens, both of which were a source of increase to the troop funds.

Mrs. Ellton returned before long, and Landor went back home.

"I shall be in and out all night, more or less," he told Felipa. She reached her hands from the bedclothes and stroked the deep lines on his forehead, the lines she had had most to do with putting there. But she did not ask for confidences. She never did. It was not her way. He kissed her and went out into the night again, to sit upon his porch at a spot where, through the cottonwood branches, he commanded a view of Brewster's front door and of the windows of the commissary office.

The silence of the garrison was absolute. Over in

the company clerk's office of one of the infantry barracks there was a light for a time. Then, at about midnight, it too was put out. A cat came creeping from under the board walk and minced across the road. He watched it absently.

When he looked up again to Brewster's house, there was a chink of faint light showing through a curtain. He got up then and went down to Ellton's quarters.

Ellton himself answered the muffled knock. "I didn't turn in," he said to the mysterious figure, shrouded in a cape, with a visor down to its peering eyes.

Landor told him to get his cap and come out. He followed the shadows of the trees near the low commissary building, and they stood there, each behind a thick cottonwood trunk. Landor watched the light in Brewster's window. It disappeared before long, and they held their breaths. Ellton began to guess what was expected to happen. Yet Brewster himself did not come out.

Landor had almost decided that he had made an ungenerous mistake, when Ellton came over with one light spring and, touching him on the shoulder, pointed to the window of the commissary office. A thick, dark blanket had evidently been hung within, but the faintest red flicker showed through a tiny hole.

Then Landor remembered for the first time that there was a back door to Brewster's quarters and to the commissary. He crept over to the commissary and tried the door gently. It was fast locked. Then he went to the window. It was a low one, on a level with his

chest, with wide-apart iron bars. He ran his hand between them now, and, doubling his fist, broke a pane with a sudden blow. As the glass crashed in, he grasped the gray blanket and drew it back. Brewster was standing in front of the open safe, the package of bids in his hands, and the big rancher was beside him holding a candle and shading it with his palm. They had both turned, and were staring, terror-eyed, at the bleeding hand that held back the blanket.

"Can you see, Ellton?" Landor asked in his restrained, even voice. He evidently meant that there should be no more noise about this than necessary, that the post should know nothing of it.

"I can see, sir," the lieutenant answered.

Then Landor spoke to the commissary officer. "You will oblige me, Mr. Brewster, by returning those bids to the safe and by opening the door for me." He dropped the blanket, drew back his cut hand, warm and wet with blood, and wrapped it in a handkerchief very deliberately, as he waited.

Presently the front door opened. The commissary officer evidently had all the keys. Landor and Ellton, who were commandant and adjutant as well, went through the close-smelling storeroom, which reeked with codfish and coffee, into the office.

The citizen was still there, still holding the candle and shading it, scared out of the little wits he had at the best of times. He was too frightened as yet to curse Brewster and the wary scoundrel back in Arizona, who had set him on to tampering with the military,

and had put up the funds to that end — a small risk for a big gain.

Landor pointed to him. "Who is this?" he asked.

Brewster told him. "It is Mr. Lawton, of the Circle K Ranch."

"What is he doing here?"

"He was helping me."

"Helping you to do what?"

"To get out the bids." His courage was waxing a little.

"For what purpose?" went on the cross questions.

"To take them over to my quarters and keep them safe."

"Yes?" said Landor. The inflection was not pleasing. It caused Brewster to answer somewhat weakly, "Yes."

"Do you think, sir, that you could tell that to twelve officers and make them believe it?"

Brewster was silent, but he neither flinched nor cowered, nor yet shifted his eyes.

Landor turned to the citizen. "Where is your bid, Mr. Lawton?"

"I ain't put it in yet," he stammered feebly.

"Don't put it in, then. Leave the reservation to-night. You understand me, do you? Now go!"

Lawton set down the candle upon the desk, and crept away by the rear door.

After he had gone, Landor turned to Brewster once more. "Are all the bids in the safe again?"

They were.

"Is it closed?"

It was.

"Give me the keys — all the keys."

He handed them over.

Ellton stood by the door, with his hands in his pockets, and a countenance that tried hard to maintain the severity of discipline. But he was plainly enjoying it.

"Now, Mr. Brewster," said Landor, going to the safe and resting his elbow upon it, and leaning forward in his earnestness, "I am going to tell you what you are to do. It would be better for the service and for all concerned if you do it quietly. I think you will agree with me, that any scandal is to be avoided. Come to the opening of the bids to-morrow, at noon, quite as though nothing of this disgraceful sort had happened. I will keep the keys until then. But by retreat to-morrow evening I want your resignation from the service in the hands of the adjutant. If it is not, I shall prefer charges against you the next morning. But I hardly think you will deem it advisable to stand a court-martial." He stopped and stood erect again.

Brewster started to protest, still with the almost unmoved countenance of an innocent man. At any rate, he was not an abject, whining scoundrel, thought Ellton, with a certain amount of admiration.

Landor held up a silencing hand. "If you have any explanations that you care to make, that it would be worth any one's time to listen to, you may keep them for a judge advocate." He pointed to the door.

Brewster hesitated for a moment, then walked out,

a little unsteadily. They blew out the candle and took down the gray blanket. "A stone can have broken that pane, and I cut my hand on a bottle," said Landor.

Ellton answered "Very good," and they went out, locking the door.

XVI

The contract went to a needy and honest contractor when the bids were opened. And by night the whole garrison was in excitement over Brewster's inexplicable resignation. It was inexplicable, but not unexplained. He went around to all the officers with the exception only of Landor and Ellton, and told that he had some time since decided to give up the service and to read and practise law in Tucson. No one was inclined to believe it. But no one knew what to believe, for Ellton and his captain held their tongues. They left the commandant himself in ignorance.

Brewster got hunting leave, pending the acceptance of his resignation, and went to the railway. In less than a week he was all but forgotten in a newer interest.

A raiding party of hostiles had passed near the fort, and had killed, with particular atrocity, a family of settlers. The man and his wife had been tortured to death, the baby had had its brains beaten out against the trunk of a tree, a very young child had been hung by the wrist tendons to two meat hooks on the walls of the ranch-house, and left there to die. One big boy had had his eyelids and lips and nose cut off, and had been staked down to the ground with his remains of a face lying over a red-ant hole. Only two had man-

aged to escape, — a child of ten, who had carried his tiny sister in his arms, twenty miles of cañons and hills, to the post.

Felipa had taken charge of the two, being the only woman in the place not already provided with children of her own, and had roused herself to an amount of capability her husband had never suspected her of. She belonged to the tribe of unoccupied women, as a rule, not that she was indolent so much as that she appeared to have no sense of time nor of the value of it. Landor, who had always one absorbing interest or another to expend his whole energy upon, even if it were nothing larger than running the troop kitchen, thought her quite aimless, though he never addressed that or any other reproach to her. He was contented at the advent of the hapless orphans for one thing, that they superseded the Ellton baby, which he secretly detested with a kind of unreasonable jealousy.

His contentment was not to last for long, however. The quartermaster broke in upon it rudely as he sat on the porch one morning after guard-mounting, "Have you seen the man who came up with the scouts from Grant?"

Landor knew that the scouts had come in the afternoon before, and were in camp across the creek; but he had not seen their chief, and he said so.

"Handsome fellow," went on the quartermaster, "and looks like a gentleman. Glories in the Ouida-esque name of Charles Morely Cairness, and signs it in full."

"Sounds rather like a family magazine novel hero, doesn't it?" Landor said, with a hint of a sneer, then repented, and added that Cairness had been with him as guide, and was really a fine fellow. He turned his eyes slowly, without moving, and looked at Felipa. She was sitting near them in a patch of sun-sifted shade behind the madeira vines, sewing on a pinafore for the little girl who was just then, with her brother, crossing the parade to the post school, as school call sounded. He knew well enough that she must have heard, her ears were so preternaturally sharp. But the only sign she gave was that her lips had set a little. So he waited in considerable uneasiness for what might happen. He understood her no more than he had that first day he had met her riding with the troops from Kansas, when her indifferent manner had chilled him, and it was perhaps because he insisted upon working his reasoning from the basis that her character was complicated, whereas it was absolutely simple. He met constantly with her with much the same sort of mental sensation that one has physically, where one takes a step in the dark, expecting a fall in the ground, and comes down upon a level. The jar always bewildered him. He was never sure what she would do next, though she had never yet, save once, done anything flagrantly unwise. He dreaded, however, the moment when she might chance to meet Cairness face to face.

Which happened upon the following day. And he was there to see it all, so that the question he had not cared to ask was answered forever beyond the possibility

of a misunderstanding. It was stable time, and she walked down to the corrals with him. He left her for a moment by the gate of the quartermaster's corral while he went over to the picket line. The bright clear air of a mountain afternoon hummed with the swish click-clock, swish click-clock of the curry-combs and brushes, and the busy scraping of the stable brooms in the stalls.

Felipa stood leaning against the gate post, her bare head outlined in bold black and white against the white parasol that hung over her shoulders. She was watching one of the troop herds coming up from water, — the fine, big horses, trotting, bucking, rearing, kicking, biting at each other with squeals and whinnyings, tossing their manes and whisking their tails. Some of them had rolled in the creek bed, and then in the dust, and were caked with mud from neck to croup. They frisked over to their own picket line, and got into rows for the grooming.

She was looking at them with such absorbed delight that she started violently when close behind her a voice she had not heard in four long, repressed years spoke with the well-remembered intonation: "He had better go to the farrier the first thing in the morning. I can't have him stove-up," and Cairness came out of the gate.

He saw her, and without the hesitation of an instant raised his slouch hat and kept on. A government scout does not stop to pass the time of day with an officer's wife.

It would have been best so, and she knew it, had

indeed meant to make it like this on her part, but a feeling swept over her that if they did not speak now, they would pass down to their deaths in silence. She reached out her hand to stop him, and spoke.

He turned about and stood still, with his head uncovered, looking straight into her face. Another man might have wished it a little less open and earnest, a little more downcast and modest, but he liked it so. Yet he waited, erect and immovable, and she saw that he meant that every advance should come from her. He was determined to force her to remember that he was a chief of scouts.

She waited, too, made silent by sudden realization of how futile anything that she might say would be. "I am glad to see you again," she faltered; "it is four years since Black River and the cloud-burst." She was angry at her own stupidity and want of resource, and her tone was more casual than she meant it to be.

His own was instantly as cold. "I supposed you had quite forgotten all that," he said.

She had done very well, up to then, but she was at the end of her strength. It had been strained to the snapping for a long while, and now it snapped. Slowly, painfully, a hot, dark flush spread over her face to the black line of her hair. The squaw was manifested in the changed color. It altered her whole face, while it lasted, then it dropped back and left a dead gray pallor. Her lips were quivering and yellow, and her eyes paled oddly, as those of a frightened wild beast do. But still they were not lowered.

Cairness could not take his own from them, and they stood so for what seemed to them both a dumb and horrible eternity, until Landor came up, and she caught at his arm to steady herself. The parasol whirled around on its stick and fell. Cairness picked it up, knocked off the dust, and handed it to Landor. He could see that he knew, and it was a vast relief.

It is only a feeble love in need of stimulants and spicing that craves secrecy. A strong one seeks the open and a chance to fight to the end, whatever that may be, before the judges of earth and heaven. They stood facing each other, challenging across the woman with the look in their eyes that men have worn since long ere ever the warriors of old disputed the captive before the walls of Troy.

It made it none the better that only Landor had the right to give her the strength of his arm, and that only Cairness had the right to the desperate, imploring look she threw him. It was a swift glance of a moment, and then she reached out a steady enough hand for the parasol, and smiled. It had been much too tragic to last — and in those surroundings. It was a flash of the naked swords of pain, and then they were sheathed. But each had left a sharp gash. No one had seen it. Perhaps to many there would have been nothing to see.

Landor was the first to find speech. In the harsh light of the pause he saw that it was foolish as well as useless to beg the issue. "Has Mrs. Landor told you that I found your letter to her on the body of the prospector, and delivered it to her?" The words were

sufficiently overbearing, but the manner was unendurable.

It occurred to Cairness that it was ungenerous of Landor to revenge himself by a shot from the safe intrenchment of his rank. "Mrs. Landor has had time to tell me nothing," he said, and turned on his spurred heel and went off in the direction of the post. But it was not a situation, after all, into which one could infuse much dignity. He was retreating, anyway it might be looked at, and there is bound to be more or less ignominy in the most creditable retreat.

As they walked back to the post, Landor did not speak to Felipa. There was nothing he could say unless he were to storm unavailingly, and that was by no means his way. And there was nothing for which he could, with reason, blame her. All things considered, she had acted very well. She moved beside him serenely, not in the least cowed.

Later, when he came in from dress parade, he found her reading in the sitting room. She looked up and smiled, but his face was very angry, and the chin strap of his helmet below his mouth and the barbaric yellow plume added to the effect of awful and outraged majesty. He stopped in front of her. "I have been thinking things over," he said. She waited. "Three years ago I offered you your liberty to marry that man. I repeat the offer now."

She stood up very deliberately and faced him with a look he had never seen before in her eyes, dark and almost murderous. But she had her fury under con-

trol. He had guessed that her rage might be a very ugly thing, but he drew back a step at the revelation of its possibilities. Twice she tried hard to speak. She put her hand to her throat, where her voice burned away as it rose. Then it came from the depths of that being of hers, which he had never fathomed.

"Are you trying to drive me off?" she said measuredly. "Do you wish me to go away from you? If you do, I will go. I will go, and I will never come back. But I will not go to him — not on my own account. It doesn't matter what happens to me; but on your account and on his, I will never go to him — not while you are alive." She stopped, and every nerve in her body was tense to quivering, her drawn lips worked.

"And if I were out of the way?" he suggested.

She had never been cruel intentionally before, and afterward she regretted it. But she raised her eyebrows and turned her back on him without answering.

XVII

Lawton believed himself to be ill-used. He had written to Stone a strangely composed and spelled account of the whole matter, and mingled reproaches for having gotten him into it; and Stone had replied that it was no affair of his one way or another, but so far as he could make out Lawton had made a mess of it and a qualified fool of himself.

Whereupon the rancher, his feelings being much injured, and his trust in mankind in general shattered, did as many a wiser man has done before him, — made himself very drunk, and in his cups told all that he knew to two women and a man. "I'd like to know whose affair it is, if it ain't his, the measly sneak. He sicked me on," — oaths, as the grammars phrase it, "understood." The tears dribbled off his fierce mustache, and the women and the man laughed at him, but they were quite as drunk as he was, and they forgot all about it at once. Lawton did not forget. He thought of it a great deal, and the more he thought, the more he wanted revenge.

Now if one cannot have revenge upon the real malefactor himself, because one is afraid of him, there is still satisfaction to be derived, to a certain extent, from

wreaking it upon the innocent, of whom one is not afraid. Lawton felt, in his simple soul, that Stone was astute with the astuteness of the devil and all his angels. On the other hand, he believed the government to be dull. It was big, but it was stupid. Was not the whole frontier evidence of that fact to him? Clearly, then, the government was the one to be got even with.

He had been in hiding three weeks. Part of the time he had stayed in the town near the post, small, but as frontier towns went, eminently respectable and law-abiding. For the rest he had lain low in a house of very bad name at the exact edge of the military reservation. The poison of the vile liquor he had drunk without ceasing had gotten itself into his brain. He had reached the criminal point, not bold, — he was never that, — but considerably more dangerous, upon the whole. He drank more deeply for two days longer, after he received Stone's letter, and then, when he was quite mad, when his eyes were bleared and fiery and his head was dry and hot and his heart terrible within him, he went out into the black night.

It was still early. The mountain echoes had not sung back the tattoo of the trumpets as yet. There was a storm coming on from the snow peak in the west, and the clouds, dark with light edges, were thick in the sky. Lawton was sober enough now. Not so far away in its little pocket among the hills he could see the post, with all its lights twinkling, as though one of the clear starry patches in the heavens were reflected

in a black lake in the valley. And the road stretched out faint and gray before him.

He went in through the gate, and was once more upon that reservation he had been commanded by the overbearing tyrant representative of the military to leave, several weeks before. As he trudged along, tattoo went. In the clear silence, beneath the sounding-boards of the low clouds, he heard the voice of one of the sergeants. He shook his fist in the direction. Tattoo being over, some of the lights were put out, but there were still plenty to guide him. He did not want to get there too early, so he walked more slowly, and when he came to the edge of the garrison, he hesitated.

The chances of detection would certainly be less if he should go back of the officers' quarters, instead of the barracks. But to do that he would have to cross the road which led from the trader's to the quadrangle, and he would surely meet some one, if it were only some servant girl and her lover. He had observed and learned some things in his week of waiting in the post — that week which otherwise had gone for worse than nothing. He took the back of the barracks, keeping well away from them, stumbling in and out among rubbish heaps. He had no very clear idea of what he meant to do, or of why he was going in this particular direction; but he was ready for anything that might offer to his hand. If he came upon Landor or the adjutant or any of them, he would put a knife into him. But he was not going to the trouble of hunting

them out. And so he walked on, and came to the haystacks, looming, denser shadows against the sky.

Then taps sounded, ringing its brazen dirge to the night in a long, last note. It ended once, but the bugler went to the other side of the parade and began again. Lawton repeated the shaking of his fist. He was growing impatient, and also scared. A little more of that shrill music, and his nerves would go into a thousand quivering shreds — he would be useless. Would the cursed, the many times cursed military never get to bed? He waited in the shadow of the corrals, leaning against the low wall, gathering his forces. The sentry evidently did not see him. The post grew more and more still, the clouds more and more thick.

Gradually it began to form itself in his softened brain what he meant to do. It is safest to avenge oneself upon dumb beasts, after all. By and by he began to feel along the adobe wall, and when he found a niche for his foot, he started to clamber up. He had climbed so many corral walls, to sit atop of them with his great, booted legs dangling, and meditatively whittle when he should have been at work, that it was easy for him, and in a moment he was on the shingled roof, lying flat. In another he had dropped down upon a bed of straw.

He put out his hand and touched a warm, smooth flank. The horse gave a little low whinny. Quick as a flash he whipped out his knife and hamstrung it, not that one only, but ten other mules and horses before

he stopped. He groped from stall to stall, and in each cut just once, unerringly and deep, so that the poor beast, which had turned its head and nosed at the touch of the hand of one of those humans who had always been its friends, was left writhing, with no possible outcome but death with a bullet in its head.

He was waking now to his work. But he had enough of horses. He stopped, sheathed his knife, and, feeling in his pockets, drew out a box of matches. A little spluttering flame caught in a pile of straw, and showed a hind foot dragging helplessly. It crept up, and the mule plunged on three legs, dragging the other along. It snorted, and then every animal in that corral, which was the quartermaster's, smelt danger and snorted too, and struck from side to side of its stall. Those in the next corral caught the fear.

If the sentry outside heard, he paid no attention. It was common enough for the horses to take a simultaneous fit of restlessness in the night, startled by some bat flapping through the beams or by a rat scurrying in the grain. In ten minutes more a flame had reached the roof. In another ten minutes the sentry had discharged his carbine three times, fire call had been sounded in quick, alarming notes, and men and officers, half dressed, had come running from the barracks and the line.

Any other fire — excepting always in an ammunition magazine — is easier to handle than one in a stable. It takes time to blind plunging horses and lead them out singly. And there is no time to take. Hay and straw

and gunny-sacks and the dry wood of the stable go up like tinder. It has burned itself out before you can begin to extinguish it.

There were four corrals in the one, and two of them were on fire. They had spread wet blankets on the roof of the third, but it, too, caught directly. The big, yellow-hearted flames poured up into the sky. The glow was cast back again from the blackness of the low clouds, and lit up the ground with a dazing shimmer. It blinded and burned and set the rules of fire drill pretty well at naught, when the only water supply was in small buckets and a few barrels, and the horses had kicked over two of the latter.

In the corral where the fire had started and was best under way, and in the stall farthest from the gate, a little pinto mustang was jerking at its halter and squealing with fear. It was Cairness's horse. He had been allowed to stable it there, and he himself was not down with his scouts in the ill-smelling camp across the creek, but had a room at the sutler's store, a good three-quarters of a mile from the corrals. As soon as the bugle call awoke him, he started at a run; but the fire was beyond fighting when he got there.

He grabbed a man at the gate, who happened to be the quartermaster sergeant himself, and asked if his horse had been taken out.

The sergeant spent more time upon the oaths with which he embellished the counter-question as to how he should know anything about it, than would have been consumed in a civil explanation.

Cairness dropped him and went into the corrals to see for himself. The fire roared and hissed, flung charred wood into the air, and let it fall back again. He remembered, in an inconsequent flash, how one night in the South Pacific he had taken a very pretty girl below to see the engines. They had stood in the stoke-hole on a heap of coal, hand in hand, down beneath the motion of the decks where the only movement seemed to be the jar of the screw working against the thrust block and the reverberation of the connecting-rod and engines. A luckless, dust-caked wretch of a stoker had thrown open the door of a furnace in front of them, and they had seen the roaring, sputtering, seething whirl of fire within. They had given a simultaneous cry, hiding their scorched faces in their arms, and stumbled blindly over the coal beds back to the clattering of the engine rooms.

It had all been very like this, only that this was a little worse, for there were half a dozen dead animals lying across the stalls, and others were being shot. The pistols snapped sharply, and the smell of powder was more pungent than all the other smells.

He passed an officer who had a smoking six-shooter in his hand, and yelled in his ear, "Why are you doing that?" He had forgotten that it was by no means his place to question.

"Been hamstrung," the officer bawled back hoarsely.

In the end stall the bronco was still squealing and whimpering in an almost human key. He struck it on the flank with his open palm and spoke, "Get over

there." It had been made so much of a pet, and had been so constantly with him, that it was more intelligent than the average of its kind. It got over and stood quiet and still, trembling. He cut the halter close to the knot, turned it out of the stall, and flinging himself across its back dug his heels into its belly.

Just for a moment it hesitated, then started with the bronco spring, jumping the dead mules, shying from right to left and back again, and going out through the gates at a run. Cairness held on with his knees as he had learned to do when he had played at stock-rider around Katâwa and Glen Lomond in the days of his boyhood, as he had done since with the recruits at hurdle drill, or when he had chased a fleet heifer across the prairie and had had no time to saddle. He could keep his seat, no fear concerning that, but it was all he could do. The pony was not to be stopped. He had only what was left of the halter shank by way of a bridle, and it was none at all. A Mexican knife bit would hardly have availed.

They tore on, away from the noise of the flames, of the falling timber and the shouted commands, around the haystacks so close to the barbed-wire fence that the barbs cut his boot, off by the back of the quarters, and then upon the road that led from the reservation. If the pony could be kept on that road, there was small danger from dog holes. He would run himself out in time. The length of time was what was uncertain, however. A cow-pony can go a good many hours at a stretch.

Cairness sat more erect, and settled down to wait. The motion was so swift that he hardly felt it. He turned his head and looked back at the flaming corrals, and, remembering the dead animals, wondered who had hamstrung them. Then he peered forward again the little way he could see along the road, and began to make out that there was some one ahead of him. Whoever it was scurrying ahead there, bent almost double in his speed, was the one who had hamstrung the mules and horses, and who had set fire to the corrals. The pony was rather more under control now. It could be guided by the halter shank.

The man, still running, dodged from the road and started across country. Cairness wheeled and followed him. It was open ground, with not so much as a scrub oak or a rock in sight. The thick darkness offered the only chance of escape. But Cairness had chased yearlings in nights as black, and had brought them back to the herd. Down by the creek where the trees were thick, there would have been a good chance for escape, almost a certainty indeed, but there was little here. The man dodged again. It was just to that very thing that the pony had been trained. Habit got the better of stampede with it. It, too, dodged sharply.

Cairness leaned far over and made a grab, but the first time he missed. The second he caught the neckerchief and held it, dragging the man, who resisted with all his giant strength, digging his toes into the ground as they tore along. And he was heavy. Cair-

ness had no stirrup or pommel to trust to. He saw that it was a case of falling or of leaving go, and he decided to fall. The man would go underneath anyway.

The man did go underneath and bravely offered resistance. Cairness had the twofold strength of his wiry build and of his bull-dog race. But Lawton — he knew it was Lawton now — would have been stronger yet, save that the three weeks' spree had told, and he was breathless.

Cairness sat across him and held a revolver to his mouth. The life of the plains teaches agility of various sorts, but chiefly in the matter of drawing a six-shooter. "You fired the corrals," Cairness gasped.

The fall had knocked the breath from his body. The under dog did not answer.

"And you hamstrung those horses."

No answer still.

"Why did you do it?"

No answer.

"I'll break your jaws if you don't open them." The jaws opened forthwith, but no sound came, and Lawton struggled feebly.

It occurred to Cairness then that with no breath in your lungs and with twelve stone on your chest, speech is difficult. He slid off and knelt beside the rancher, still with the revolver levelled. "Now, why did you do it, eh?" He enforced the "eh" with a shake.

"I dunno. I didn't."

"Didn't you, then? You did, though, and you can

go back with me till we find out why. Give me your firearms. Lively!"

Lawton produced a brace of revolvers.

"And your knife."

He handed it over also.

"Now you get up and walk in front of me, and don't you try to bolt. I can run faster than you can, and, anyway, I'll shoot you if you try it."

Lawton moved ahead a few steps; then he began to cry, loudly, blubbering, his nerves gone all to shreds. He implored and pleaded and wailed. He hadn't known what he was doing. He had been drunk. They had treated him badly about the beef contract. Stone had gone back on him. The oaths that he sobbed forth were not new to Cairness, but they were very ugly.

"Cheese that cussing, do you hear?" he ordered.

Lawton stopped. To forbid him swearing was to forbid him speech. He shuffled ahead in silence.

When Cairness got him to the post and turned him over to the officer-of-the-day, the fire had burned itself out and quiet was settling down again. Big warm drops were beginning to splash from the clouds.

The officer-of-the-day put Lawton into the care of the guard and asked Cairness in to have a drink, calling him "my good man." Cairness was properly aware of the condescension involved in being asked into an officer's dining room, but he objected to being condescended to by a man who doubled his negatives, and he refused.

"Is there anything, then, that I can do for you?" the officer asked. His intentions were good; Cairness was bound to realize that, too.

"Yes, sir," he answered; "you can see that I get a mounted man and a horse at reveille to-morrow. I want to hunt for my pony. I lost it when I caught that man."

The officer-of-the-day agreed. And Cairness, not having a hat to raise, forgot himself and saluted. Then he went back to the sutler's through the already pelting rain. He was glad he had caught Lawton, mainly because of what he hoped to get out of him yet, about the Kirby affair. But he was sorry for the big clumsy fool, too. He had been an easy-going, well-intentioned boss in the days when Cairness had been his hand. And, too, he was sorry, very sorry, about the pony. If it were to fall into the hands of Mexicans or even of some of the Mescalero Indians, his chances of seeing it again would be slight. And he was fond of it, mainly because it had helped him to save Mrs. Landor's life.

XVIII

Cairness had made a tune for himself and was putting to it the words of the ill-fated poet of his own Land of the Dawning.

> 'Oh! wind that whistles, o'er thorns and thistles
> Of the fruitful earth, like a goblin elf,
> Why should he labor to help his neighbor,
> Who feels too reckless to help himself?"

He felt altogether reckless. In just such a mood, he reflected, his grandmother had probably poisoned her first husband. He could almost have poisoned Landor, the big duty-narrowed, conventional, military machine. Why could he not have married some one of his own mental circumspection? — Mrs. Campbell, for instance. He had watched that affair during his enlistment. More the pity it had come to nothing. Landor could have understood Mrs. Campbell. Then he thought of Felipa, as he had seen her first, looking full into the glare of the sunset, and afterward at him, with magnificent impersonality.

"He has caught a lioness and tricked her out in fashionable rags and taught her some capers, and now he thinks he has improved the animal," he said to himself, and raged inwardly, asking the intangible Fate, which was always opposing him, if there was not

enough little doll women in the world that such an one as Felipa must be whittled down to the size.

The probable outcome of things at the rate they were going was perfectly apparent. Landor would advance in age, respectability, and rank, and would be retired and settle down on three-fourths pay. He himself would end up in some cow-boy row, degraded and worthless, a tough character very probably, a fine example of nothing save atavism. And Felipa would grow old. That splendid triumphant youth of hers would pass, and she would be a commonplace, subdued, middle-aged woman, in whom a relapse to her nature would be a mere vulgarity.

He recalled the dark, unbecoming flush that had deepened the color of her skin just enough to show the squaw, beyond mistaking, at least to one who knew. It was all very well now. But later, later she would look like that frequently, if not all the time. With youth she would lose her excuse for being. He knew that very well. But it was the youth, the majestic, powerful youth, that he loved. He had seen too many old hags of squaws, disfigurers of the dead and wounded, drudges of the rancheria, squatting on hides before their tepees, not to know what Felipa's decline would be in spite of the Anglo-Saxon strain that seemed to show only in her white skin.

Her only salvation, he knew that too, was to keep that strain always uppermost, to force it to the surface, exactly as Landor was doing now. Conventional, stately, reserved, in the garb of civilization, she would

have a certain dignity. But youth was too good to sell for that.

> "Where is the use of the lip's red charm,
> The heaven of hair, the pride of the brow,
> And the blood that blues the inside arm?" —

He laughed crossly. Evidently he was dropping back into the poetical tendencies of his most callow youth. He would be doing her a sonnet next, forsooth. He had done two or three of them in his school days for Sydney damsels. That was when he had aspired to be ranked in his own country with Gordon. Good Lord! how many aspirations of various sorts he had had. And he was a cow-boy.

Somewhere in that same poem, he remembered, there had been advice relative to a man's contending to the uttermost for his life's set prize, though the end in sight were a vice. He shrugged his shoulders. It might be well enough to hold to that in Florence and the Middle Ages. It was highly impracticable for New Mexico and the nineteenth century. So many things left undone can be conveniently laid to the prosaic and materialistic tendencies of the age. Things were bad enough now — for Landor, for himself, and most especially for Felipa. But if one were to be guided by the romantic poets, they could conceivably be much worse.

He struck his pony with the fringed end of the horse-hair lariat that hung around his pommel, and cantered on in the direction of the post. The pony had been found among the foot-hills, without any

trouble. That, at any rate, had been a stroke of luck. He had led it into the fort just at the end of guard-mounting, and had met a party of riders going out.

Mrs. Landor was with them. She had a little battered, brass trumpet hanging from her horn, and he knew that they were going to play at hare and hounds. She and the three with her were evidently the hares. They would take a ten minutes' start; then, at the sound of the trumpet, the hounds would follow. The riding was sometimes reckless. A day or two before he had seen Felipa leap an arroyo, the edges of which were crumbling in, and take a fallen tree on very dangerous ground.

He looked about now for a sign of either party. Across the creek was some one riding slowly along the crest of a hill, seeming so small and creeping that only a very trained eye could have made it out. It was probably a hound. The hares lay low, in cañons and gullies and brush, as a rule. As he scanned the rest of the valley, his horse stopped short, with its fore legs planted stiffly. He looked down and saw that he was at the brink of a sheer fall of twenty feet or more, like a hole scooped in the side of the little rise he was riding over. He remembered, then, that there was a cave somewhere about. He had often heard of it, and probably it was this. He dismounted, and, tying the pony in a clump of bushes, walked down and around to investigate.

It was plainly the cave. He went and stood in the mouth and looked into the dark, narrowing throat. A

weird silence poured up with the damp, earthy smell. He went farther in, half sliding down the steep bank of soft, powdery, white earth. There was only the uncanny light which comes from reflection from the ground upward. But by it he could see innumerable tiny footprints, coyote, squirrel, prairie-dog, polecat tracks and the like. It took very little imagination to see yellow teeth and eyes gleaming from black shadows also, although he knew there were no dangerous animals in those parts.

When he was well within, he began to investigate, and he recalled now that he had heard a great deal of this cave. It was very large, supposedly, but almost unexplored. Tradition ran that the Spaniards, in the long-past days of their occupation, had had a big silver mine in there, worked by padres who had taught the timid Indians to believe that it was haunted, that they might not take it for themselves, nor yet guide others to it. And, too, it had been the refuge and hiding-place of Billy the Kid for years. It was said that since then a corporal and three men had gone in once, and that a search party had found their gnawed skeletons by the edge of the river that flowed there underground. Oddly enough, and thanks to the missionary fathers, it had never served as an Indian stronghold, though its advantages for such a use were manifest.

Cairness sat himself down and tried to listen for the flow of the great black river yonder in the great black hollow. By dint of straining his ears he almost fancied

that he did catch a sound. But at the same instant, there came a real and unmistakable one. He started a little, not quite sure, just at first, what manner of wild beast, or man, or genius of the cave might pounce out upon him.

It was only some one standing at the mouth of the hole, however, a shadow against the shimmering sunlight. And it was a woman — it was Felipa.

He sat quite still, clinching his teeth and clawing his fingers tensely. In the great crises of life, training and upbringing and education fall away, and a man is governed by two forces, his instincts and his surroundings. And Cairness's instincts were in entire accord with his surroundings; they were of the Stone Age, when men fought with the beasts of the wilderness in their cave homes, and had only the law of sheer strength. He leaned forward, holding his breath, and watched her. Had she seen his horse tied up above, and come here to find him — because he was here?

She might have seen two dots of light fixed on her from the shadow, if she had looked that way. But she did not, and came unconcernedly down. She was sure-footed and agile, and she was daring, too. He himself had felt a qualm at coming here. But she did not appear to hesitate once. She came on, close by where he sat, and going to the dark passage peered in. Then she turned away and caught sight of him.

He was accustomed to the gloom by now, but she was not. She could only see that there was some one in the shadow. It flashed through his mind that she

would scream, but the next moment he knew that she would not.

She drew herself up and grasped her loaded quirt more firmly. There are some natures to which flight from a thing feared is physically impossible. They must not only face danger, they must go up to it. It is a trait, like any other. Felipa took two steps toward him.

He came out of the rock nook into the half light and spoke her own name.

She was frightened now. The quirt fell from her hand with a thud. She loosed her hold upon her long riding skirt and tripped over it.

If he had not sprung forward, with his arms outstretched to catch her, she would have fallen, face downward in the dust. It was three times now he had so saved her.

He knew even then while her hand grasped at his arm, that he should have set her upon her feet, as he had done before. He knew that she had merited at least that. But he held her tight and close, and bending back her head, his own very close above it, looked into her eyes.

Then he stopped, with every muscle drawn, for he had seen in her answering, unflinching gaze that he was losing her, surely, irrevocably losing her. He let her go, almost throwing her away, and she caught hold of a ledge of rock to steady herself. He picked up the heavy quirt and held it out to her, with a shaking hand, shame-faced, and defiant, too.

She took it, and they both stood for a time without

speaking. Then she turned her head and looked up at the sunshine. "I think I must go," she whispered. But she did not move.

He asked her angrily why she had ever come at all, and she explained, with a piteous whimper, like a penitent child's, that she had left her horse tied in a little hollow and had come to explore. She had often meant to explore before this.

He was still more exasperated, with himself and with her, that he had allowed himself to think for one moment that she had come on purpose to find him. Where were the others? How did she happen to be here alone? he asked.

She told him that they had all scattered some time before, with the hounds in full cry. "I must go," she repeated more firmly now, "they will be looking —" She stopped short.

There was the crunching of heavy feet up above, on the gravel. It came to them both, even to her, that for them to be seen there together would be final. There would be no explaining it away. Cairness thought of her. She thought of her husband. It would ruin him and his life.

It was done before either of them was conscious of doing it. The black throat of the cave was open behind him. Cairness jumped back into it, and she turned away and stood waiting, stiff with fear, not of the man whoever it might prove to be up there, but for the one who had stepped into the unknown dangers of the darkness behind her.

The man up above showed himself, and putting his hands to his mouth shouted, "Felipa!"

She gave a cry of relief. "Mr. Cairness, Mr. Cairness," she called, "it is only my husband." She went herself a little way into the passage. "Jack, Mr. Cairness has gone in there, call to him." And she called again herself.

Landor came sliding and running down. His face was misshapen with the anger that means killing. She saw it, and her powers came back to her all at once. She put both hands against his breast and pushed him back, with all the force of her sinewy arms. His foot slipped on a stone and he fell.

She dropped beside him and tried to hold him down. "He did not know I was coming here," she pleaded. "It was a mistake, Jack! Will you wait until I tell you? Will you wait?" She was clinging around his neck and would not be shaken off. He dragged her in the dust, trying to get free himself.

Cairness had groped his way back. He stood watching them. And he, too, was ready to kill. If Landor had raised his hand against her, he would have shot him down.

But, instead, Landor stopped abruptly, rigid with the force of will. "I will wait. Go on," he said. His voice was low and rasping.

It dawned upon Cairness that this was rather more than a military machine after all, that he had underestimated it.

Felipa stood up and told the truth shortly. "It

was my fault, if it was any one's," she ended. "You may kill me, if you like. But if you hurt him, I will kill myself." It was she who was threatening now, and she never said more than she meant. She turned almost disdainfully from them, and went up and out of the cave.

Landor stopped behind, looking at Cairness undecidedly for a moment longer. "It is well for you that I can believe her implicitly," he said. It had been a relapse to the Stone Age, but the rebound to the nineteenth century was as quick.

Cairness bowed, with no realization of the humor of it. "You are equally fortunate," he said easily, and motioned with his hand to the opening above, where Felipa was going. He might have been under his own roof, and that the door.

Landor went. Felipa waited for him, already mounted. He mounted his own horse and rode beside her back to the post. They did not speak, and he was conscious above his anger that his fondness for her had been gradually turning to dislike, and was now loathing. He had seen her dragging in the dust before him, pleading abjectly. She had humiliated him and herself in the presence of Cairness, of all men, and he would never forget it. A woman who once grovels at a man's feet has lost thenceforth her power over him.

XIX

If you take even a good-humored puppy of a savage breed and tie him to a kennel so that all his natural energy strikes in; if you feed him upon raw meat, when you feed him at all, but half starve him for the most part; and if you tantalize and goad him whenever you are in search of a pastime, he is more than likely to become a dangerous beast when he grows up. He is then a menace to the public, so you have but one course left — to take him out and shoot him.

That is the proper way to bring up dogs. It makes them useful members of society. And it applies equally well to Indians. It has worked beautifully with them for several hundred years. In Canada they have run it on another principle. But they have missed much of the fun we have had out of it. In the territories there was plenty of such fun. And it had pretty well reached its height in the spring of '83.

The Indians, being wicked, ungrateful, suspicious characters, doubted the promises of the White-eyes. But it is only just to be charitable toward their ignorance. They were children of the wilderness and of the desert places, walking in darkness. Had the lights of the benefits of civilization ever shone in upon them, they would have realized that the government

of these United States, down to its very least official representative, never lies, never even evades.

"Have I ever lied to you?" Crook asked them.

And the deaf old chief Pedro answered for them: "No," he said, "when you were here before, whenever you said a thing, we knew that it was true, and we kept it in our minds. When you were here, we were content; but we cannot understand why you went away. Why did you leave us? Everything was all right when you were here."

He was but an unlearned and simple savage, and the workings of a War Department were, of course, a mystery to him. He and his people should have believed Crook. The thoughtful government which that much-harassed general represented had done everything possible to instil sweet trustfulness into their minds. But the Apache, as all reports have set forth, is an uncertain quantity.

The quiet, observant, capable man, whose fate it was to be always called in for the thankless task of undoing the evil work of others, made every effort to pacify this time, but he failed.

"Yes, we believe you," said the Apache; "but you may go away again." So he refused to be cajoled, and going upon the war-path, after much bloodshed, fled into Mexico.

The general took a couple of hundred Indian scouts, enlisted for six months' service, a troop of cavalry, and a half-dozen guides and interpreters, and followed across the border.

There was a new treaty, just made to that end. It was the fiercest of all the Apache tribes, the Chiricahuas, that had hidden itself in the fastnesses of the Sierra Madre, two hundred miles south of the boundary line. Geronimo and Juh and Chato, and other chiefs of quite as bloody fame, were with him. To capture them would be very creditable success. To fail to do so would entail dire consequences, international complications perhaps, and of a certainty the scorn and abuse of all the wise men who sat in judgment afar off.

The general kept his own counsel then, but afterward, when it was all over, he confessed, — not to the rejoicing reporter who was making columns out of him for the papers of this, and even of many another, land, — but to the friends who had in some measure understood and believed in him, that the strain and responsibility had all but worn him out. And he was no frail man, this mighty hunter of the plains.

The general of romance is a dashing creature, who wears gold lace and has stars upon his shoulder straps, and rides a fiery charger at the head of his troops. He always sits upon the charger, a field-glass in his hand and waiting aides upon every side, or flourishes a sword as he plunges into the thick of the battle smoke.

But Crook was not dashing, only quiet and steady, and sure as death. Upon parade and occasions of ceremony he wore the gold lace and the stars. To do his life's work he put on an old flannel shirt, tied a kerchief around his neck, and set a pith helmet over those far-seeing, keen little eyes. He might have been a pro-

spector, or a cow-boy, for all the outward seeming of it. His charger was oftenest a little government mule, and he walked, leading it over many and many a trail that even its sure feet could not trust.

There were plenty such trails in the Sierra Madre, through which the Apache scouts were guiding him to their hostile brothers. Cairness had come along with his own band of scouts. He had seen rough work in his time, but none equal to this. Eight mules stepped a hand's breadth from the path, and lay hundreds of feet below at the base of the precipice, their backs broken under their aparejos. The boots were torn from the men's feet, their hands were cut with sharp rocks. They marched by night sometimes, sometimes by day, always to the limit of their strength. And upon the fourteenth morning they came upon the Chiricahua stronghold. Without the scouts they could never have found it. The Indian has betrayed the Indian from first to last.

It was a little pocket, a natural fortress, high up on a commanding peak. Cairness crept forward flat along the rocks, raised his head cautiously and looked down. There in the sunrise light, — the gorgeous sunrise of the southern mountain peaks where the wind is fresh out of the universe and glitters and quivers with sparks of new life, — there was the encampment of the hostiles. It was a small Eden of green grass and water and trees high up in the Sierra — that strange mountain chain that seems as though it might have been the giant model of the Aztec builders, and that holds the mystery of a

mysterious people locked in its stone and metal breasts, as securely as it does that of the rich, lost mines whose fabled wonders no man can prove to-day.

There is a majesty about the mountains of the desolate regions which is not in those of more green and fertile lands. Loneliness and endurance are written deep in their clefts and cañons and precipices. In the long season of the sun, they look unshrinking back to the glaring sky, with a stern defiance. It is as the very wrath of God, but they will not melt before it. In the season of the rains, black clouds hang low upon them, guarding their sullen gloom. But just as in the sternest heart is here and there a spot of gentleness, so in these forbidding fastnesses there are bits of verdure and soft beauty too.

And the Indian may be trusted to know of these. Here where the jacales clustered, there was grass and wood and water that might last indefinitely. The fortifications of Nature had been added to those of Nature's man. It was a stronghold.

But the Apaches held it for only a day, for all that. They were unprepared and overconfident. Their bucks were for the most part away plundering the hapless Mexican settlements in the desert below. They had thought that no white troops nor Mexicans could follow here, and they had neglected to count with the scouts, who had been hostiles themselves in their day, and who had the thief's advantage in catching a thief. And so while the bucks and children wandered round among the trees or bathed in the creek, while the hobbled

ponies grazed leisurely on the rank grass, and the squaws carried fuel and built fires and began their day of drudgery, they were surprised.

The fight began with a shot fired prematurely by one of the scouts, and lasted until nightfall — after the desultory manner of Indian mountain fights, where you fire at a tree-trunk or lichened rock, or at some black, red-bound head that shoots up quick as a prairie dog's and is gone again, and where you follow the tactics of the wary Apache in so far as you may. The curious part of it is that you beat him at his own game every time. It is always the troops that lose the least heavily!

The Indian wars of the southwest have been made a very small side issue in our history. The men who have carried them on have gained little glory and little fame. And yet they have accomplished a big task, and accomplished it well. They have subdued an enemy many times their own number. And the enemy has had such enormous advantages, too. He has been armed, since the 70's, even better than the troops. He has been upon his own ground — a ground that was alone enough to dismay the soldier, and one that gave him food, where it gave the white man death by starvation and thirst. He knew every foot of the country, fastnesses, water holes, creeks, and strongholds over thousands of miles. The best cavalry can travel continuously but twenty-five or thirty miles a day, carrying its own rations. The Apache, stealing his stock and food as he runs, covers his fifty or seventy-five. The troops must find and follow trails that are disguised

with impish craft. The Apache goes where he lists, and that, as a general thing, over country where devils would fear to tread.

Then throw into the scale the harassing and conflicting orders of a War Department, niggardly with its troops, several thousand miles away, wrapped in a dark veil of ignorance, and add the ever ready blame of the territorial citizen and press, and the wonder is, not that it took a score of years to settle the Apache question, but that it was ever settled at all.

The all-day fight in the Sierra Madre stronghold was a very uneven one. There were two hundred and fifty of the government forces against some thirty-five bucks. But, after all, the number comes to nothing. You may as well shoot at one enemy as at a thousand, if he is not to be seen anyway, and you cannot hit him.

Cairness reflected upon this as he fired for exactly the seventh time at a pair of beady eyes that flashed at him over a bush-topped rock by the creek, not five and twenty yards away, and then vanished utterly. There was something uncanny about it, and he was losing patience as well as ammunition. Three bullets from a repeating rifle had about finished him. One had gone through his hat. The eyes popped up again. Cairness fired again and missed. Then he did a thoroughly silly thing. He jumped out from behind his shelter and ran and leapt, straight down, and over to the rock by the stream. The beady eyes saw him coming and sparkled, with an evil sort of laughter.

If Cairness had not slipped and gone sprawling down

at that moment, the fourth bullet would have brought him up short. It sung over him, instead, and splashed against a stone, and when he got to his feet again the eyes had come out from their hiding-place. They were in the head of a very young buck. He had sprung to the top of his rock and was dancing about with defiant hilarity, waving his hands and the Winchester, and grimacing tantalizingly. "*Yaw! ya!*" he screeched. Cairness discharged his revolver, but the boy whooped once more and was down, dodging around the stone. Cairness dodged after him, wrath in his heart and also a vow to switch the little devil when he should get him. But he did not seem to be getting him.

The fighting stopped to watch the Ojo-blanco playing tag with the little Apache, right in the heart of the stronghold. The general stood still, with a chuckle, and looked on. "Naughty little boy," he remarked to the captain of the scouts; "but your man Cairness won't catch him, though."

With the sublime indifference to the mockery of the world, characteristic of his race, Cairness kept at it. It was ridiculous. He had time to be dimly aware of that. And it certainly was not war. He did not know that they were affording the opposing forces much enjoyment. He had not even observed that the firing had stopped. But he meant to catch that much qualifiedly impudent little beast, or to know the reason why. And he would probably have known the reason why, if one of the Apache scouts, embarrassed by no notions of fair play, had not taken good aim and

brought his youthful kinsman down, with a bullet through his knee.

The black eyes snapped with pain as he fell, but when Cairness, with a breathless oath at the spoiler of sport, whoever he might be, pounced down upon him, the snap turned to a twinkle. The little buck raised himself on his elbow. "How! Cairness," he grinned. "How Mees Landor?" Cairness stopped short, speechless, with his mouth open. He did not even dodge after a bullet had hummed past his head. "Who the devil — !" he began. Then it dawned upon him. It was Felipa's protégé of the old Camp Thomas days.

He was standing, and the boy was lying, and the shots of the Apaches flew about them. He stooped, and catching up his defeated foe, whose defeat was not half so entire as his own, scrambled out of the pocket and back among the troops. He carried his prisoner, who kicked vigorously with his good leg, and struck with both fists in protest against the ignominy of being held under anybody's arm like a sack of grain, back to the tied horses.

"Look out for the little customer, will you?" he said to the medical officer. "He's a great chum of mine. Many's the can of condensed milk and bag of peanuts the ungrateful young one has had out of me." "What are you doing here?" he asked in the White Mountain idiom; "you aren't a Chiricahua."

The boy grinned again. "How Mees Landor?" he repeated. His savage perception had noted that those words had some "medicine" or other that paralyzed

the Ojo-blanco temporarily. Cairness swore at him in good English, and went off abruptly.

At sunset the camp surrendered. There were seven dead bucks found, but no one ever knew, of course, how many had fallen into ravines, or dragged themselves off to die in nooks. The Apache does not dread death, but he dreads having the White-man know that he has died.

The spoils of the rancheria were varied, and some of them interesting as well. There were quite a hundred mules and horses, and there was money, to the sum of five thousand dollars or more. Also there were gold and silver watches and clothes and saddles and bridles—all the loot of the unhappy haciendas and pueblas down on the flat. But the most treasured of all their possessions was a little photograph album which had begun its varied career in the particular home of the misguided Indian philanthropist, Boston.

There was human plunder, too—women from the villages, all Mexicans but one, and that one was American. Cairness, having gone off with some scouts to reconnoitre, did not see them that night. When he came back it was already dark, and he took his supper; and rolling himself in his blanket slept, as he had always for the past fortnight, with only the faintly radiant night sky above him.

In the morning, while the cooks were getting breakfast and the steam of ration-Rio mounted as a grateful incense to the pink and yellow daybreak heavens, having bathed in the creek and elaborated his toilet

with a clean neckerchief in celebration of victory, he walked over to the bunch of tepees to see the women captives.

He knew while he was yet afar off which was the American. She stood, big and gaunt, with her feet planted wide and her fists on her hips, looking over toward the general's tent. And when Cairness came nearer, strolling along with his hands in his pockets, observing the beauties of Nature and the entire vileness of man, she turned her head and gave him a defiant stare. He took his hands from his pockets and went forward, raising his disreputable campaign hat. "Good morning, Mrs. Lawton," he said, not that he quite lived up to the excellent standard of Miss Winstanley, but that he understood the compelling force of civility, not to say the bewilderment. If you turn its bright light full in the face of one whose eyes are accustomed to the obscurity wherein walk the underbred, your chances for dazzling him until he shall fall into any pit you may have dug in his pathway are excellent.

Nor was he disconcerted that she met him with a stony front and a glare of wrath. She glanced down at his outstretched hand, and kept her own great bony one on her hip still. Then she looked at him squarely again. She did not say "Well?" but she meant it. So he answered it blandly, and suggested that she had probably forgotten him, but that he had had the pleasure of meeting her once in the States. She continued to stare. He held that a husband is a husband still

until the law or death says otherwise, and that it was no part of a man's business to inquire into the domestic relations of his friends; so he said that he had had the pleasure of meeting her husband recently. "He was at Fort Stanton," he added, "upon some little matter of business, I believe. You will be glad to hear that he was well." He did not see fit to add that he was also in the county jail, awaiting trial on charge of destruction of government property.

"What's your name, young feller?" she demanded. Cairness was hurt. "Surely, Mrs. Lawton, you have not so entirely forgotten me. I am Charles Cairness, very much at your service." But she had forgotten, and she said so.

He hesitated with a momentary compunction. She must have suffered pretty well for her sins already; her work-cut, knotty hands and her haggard face and the bend of her erstwhile too straight shoulders — all showed that plainly enough. It were not gallant; it might even be said to be cruel to worry her. But he remembered the dead Englishwoman, with her babies, stiff and dead, too, beside her on the floor of the charred cabin up among the mountains, and his heart was hardened.

"I spent a few days with the Kirbys once," he said, and looked straight into her eyes. They shifted, and there was no mistaking her uneasiness. He followed it up instantly on a bold hazard. It had to be done now, before she had time to retreat to the cover of her blank stolidity. "Why did you leave them to

be massacred? What did you have against her and those little children?"

"I didn't. None of your business," she defied him.

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said. "It happens to be my business, though."

Breakfast call sounded. At the first shrill note she started violently. She was very thoroughly unnerved, and he decided that an hour of thinking would make her worse so. He told her that he would see her after breakfast, and raising his hat again left her to the anticipation, and to helping the Mexican captives cook their meal of mescal root and rations.

Later in the day, when the general and the interpreters were engaged in making clear to the bucks, who came straggling in to surrender, the wishes and intentions of the Great Father in Washington as regarded his refractory children in Arizona, he went back to the captives' tepee. The Texan was nowhere to be seen. He called to her and got no answer, then he looked in. She was not there. One of the Mexican women was standing by, and he went up to her and asked for the Gringa.

The woman shrugged her round brown shoulders from which the rebozo had fallen quite away, and dropped her long lashes. "*No se*," she murmured.

"*Ay que si!* You do know," he laughed; "you tell me *chula*, or I will take you back to the United States with me."

She laughed too, musically, with a bewitching gurgle,

and gave him a swift glance, at once soft and sad. "*Ella es muy fea, no es simpatica, la Gringa.*"

Undoubtedly, as she said, the American was ugly and unattractive; but the Mexican was pretty and decidedly engaging. Cairness had been too nearly trapped once before to be lured now. He met the piece of brown femininity upon her own ground. "You are quite right, *querida mia.* She is ugly and old, and you are beautiful and young, and I will take you with me to the States and buy a pink dress with lovely green ribbons, if you will tell me where the old woman is."

"*'Stá' bajo,*" she stuck out her cleft chin in the direction of the trail that led out of the pocket down to the flat, far below.

"*De veras?*" asked Cairness, sharply. He was of no mind to lose her like this, when he was so near his end.

"Truly," said the little thing, and nodded vehemently.

He left her ignominiously, at a run. She stood laughing after him until he jumped over a rock and disappeared. "She is his sweetheart, the *vieja,*" she chattered to her companions.

Cairness called to four of his scouts as he ran. They joined him, and he told them to help him search. In half an hour they found her, cowering in a cranny of rocks and manzanita. He dismissed the Indians, and then spoke to her. "Now you sit on that stone there and listen to me," he said, and taking her by the shoulder put her down and stood over her.

She kept her sullen glance on the ground, but she was shaking violently.

"Your husband is in jail," he said without preface. He had done with the mask of civility. It had served its purpose.

"No he ain't."

"Yes he is. And I put him there." He left her to what he saw was her belief that it was because of the Kirby affair. "You'll see when you get back. And I'll put you there, too, if I care to. The best chance you have is to do as I tell you."

She was silent, but the stubbornness was going fast. She broke off a bunch of little pink blossoms and rolled it in her hands.

"Your best chance for keeping out of jail, too," he insisted, "is to keep on the right side of me. *Sabe?* Now what I want to know is, what part Stone has in all this." He did not know what part any one had had in it, as a matter of fact, for he had failed in all attempts to make Lawton talk, in the two days he had had before leaving the post.

"Why don't you ask him?" said Mrs. Lawton, astutely.

"Because I prefer to ask you, that's why — and to make you answer, too."

He sat down cross-legged on the ground, facing her. "I've got plenty of time, my dear woman. I can stop here all day if you can, you know," he assured her. Afterward he made a painting of her as she had sat there, in among the rocks and the scrub growth, aged, bent, malevolent, and in garments that were picturesque because they were rags. He called it the Sibyl of the Sierra Madre. And, like the Trojan, he plied her with

questions — not of the future, but of the past. "Well," he said, "are you going to answer me?"

"Didn't you find out from him?" she asked.

He changed his position leisurely, stretching out at full length and resting his head on his hand by way of gaining time. Then he told her that it was not until after he had caught and landed her husband that he had discovered that Stone was in it.

"Who told you he was?" she asked.

"Never mind all that. I'm here to question, not to be questioned. Now listen to me." And he went on to point out how she could not possibly get away from him and the troops until they were across the border, and that once there, it lay with him to turn her over to the authorities or to set her free. "You can take your choice, of course. I give you my word — and I think you are quite clever enough to believe me — that if you do not tell me what I want to know about Stone, I will land you where I've landed your husband; and that if you do, you shall go free after I've done with you. Now I can wait until you decide to answer," and he rolled over on his back, put his arms under his head, and gazed up at the jewel-blue patch of sky.

There was a long pause. A hawk lighted on a point of rock and twinkled its little eyes at them. Two or three squirrels whisked in and out. Once a scout came by and stood looking at them, then went on, noiselessly, up the mountain side.

"What do you want to know for?" asked the woman, at length.

He repeated that he was not there to be questioned, and showed her that he meant it by silence.

Presently she began again. "Well, he wasn't in it at all. Stone wasn't."

This was not what Cairness wanted either. He persisted in the silence. A prolonged silence will sometimes have much the same effect as solitary confinement. It will force speech against the speaker's own will.

Mrs. Lawton gritted her teeth at him as though she would have rejoiced greatly to have had his neck between them. By and by she started once more. "Bill jest told him about it — like a goldarned fool."

"That," said Cairness, cheerfully, "is more like it. Go on."

"That's all."

"Begging your pardon, it's not all."

"What the devil do you want to know, then?"

He considered. "Let me see. For instance, when did Lawton tell him, and why, and exactly what?"

"You don't say!" she mocked. "You want the earth and some sun and moon and stars, don't you, though? Well, then, Bill told him about a week afterward. And he told him because Stone had another hold on him (it ain't any of your business what that was, I reckon), and bullied it out of him (Bill ain't got any more backbone than a rattler), and promised to lend him money to set up for hisself on the Circle K Ranch. Want to know anything else?" she sneered.

"Several things, thanks. You haven't told me yet what version of it your husband gave to Stone." Cair-

ness was a little anxious. It was succeed or fail right here.

"Told him the truth, more idjit he."

"I didn't ask you that," he reminded her calmly. "I asked what he told."

"Say!" she apostrophized.

"Yes?"

"You're English, I reckon, ain't you?"

"Yes, and you don't like the English, I know that perfectly."

"You're right, I don't. You're as thick-headed as all the rest of them."

"Thanks. But you started out to tell me what Lawton told Stone."

"He told him the truth, I tell you: that when we heard the Apaches were coming, we lit out and drove out the stock from the corrals. I don't recollect his words."

So that was it! It took all the self-command that thirty-five varied years had taught him not to rise up and knock her head against the sharp rocks. But he lay quite still, and presently he said: "That is near enough for my purposes, thank you. But I would be interested to know, if you don't mind, what you had against a helpless woman and those two poor little babies. I wouldn't have supposed that a woman lived who could have been such a fiend as all that."

The woman launched off into a torrent of vituperation and vile language that surprised even Cairness, whose ears were well seasoned.

"Shut up!" he commanded, jumping to his feet. "You killed her and you ought to be burned at the stake for it, but you shall not talk about her like that, you devilish old crone."

She glared at him, but she stopped short nevertheless, and, flinging down the stone she had been holding, stood up also. "All right, then. You've done with me, I reckon. Now suppose you let me go back to the camp."

He turned and walked beside her. "Don't you believe I know all that I want to. I've only just begun. So that scoundrel knew the whole murderous story, and went on writing lies in his papers and covering you, when you ought to have been hung to the nearest tree, did he?—and for the excellent reason that he wanted to make use of your husband! I worked on the Circle K Ranch and on that other one over in New Mexico, which is supposed to be Lawton's, and it didn't take me long to find out that Stone was the real boss."

"He's got Bill right under his thumb," she sneered at her weak spouse.

They clambered up the mountain side, back to the camp, and Cairness escorted her to the tepee in silence. Then he left her. "Don't try to run away again," he advised. "You can't get far." He started off and turned back. "Speaking of running away, where's the Greaser you lit out with?"

She replied, with still more violent relapse into foul-tongued abuse, that he had gone off with a woman

of his own people. "Got me down into this hell of a country and took every quartillo I had and then skedaddled."

Cairness smiled. There was, it appeared, a small supply of poetic justice still left in the scheme of things to be meted out. "And then the Apache came down and bore you off like a helpless lamb," he said. "If I'd been the Apache I'd have made it several sorts of Hades for you, but I'd have scalped you afterward. You'd corrupt even a Chiricahua squaw. However, I'm glad you lived until I got you." And he left her.

But he kept a close watch upon her then and during all the hard, tedious march back to the States, when the troops and the scouts had to drag their steps to meet the strength of the women and children; when the rations gave out because there were some four hundred Indians to be provided for, when the command ate mescal root, digging it up from the ground and baking it; and when the presence of a horde of filthy savages made the White-man suffer many things not to be put in print.

But they were returning victorious. The Chiricahuas were subdued. The hazard had turned well. There would be peace; the San Carlos Agency, breeding-grounds of all ills, would be turned over to military supervision. The general who had succeeded — if he had failed it would have been such a very different story — would have power to give his promise to the Apaches and to see that it was kept. The experiment of honesty and of giving the devil his due would have a

fair trial. The voices that had cried loudest abuse after the quiet soldier who, undisturbed, went so calmly on his way, doing the thing which seemed to him right, were silenced; and the soldier himself came back into his own land, crossing the border with his herds and his tribes behind him. There was no flourish of trumpets; no couriers were sent in advance to herald that the all but impossible had been accomplished.

On a fine Sunday morning in June the triumphant general rode into a supply camp twelve miles north of the line, and spoke to the officer in command. "Nice morning, Colonel," he said. And then his quick eyes spied the most desirable thing in all the camp. It was a tin wash basin set on a potato box. The triumphant general dismounted, and washed his face.

XX

There was peace and harmony in the home of the Reverend Taylor. An air of neatness and prosperity was about his four-room adobe house. The mocking-bird that hung in a willow cage against the white wall, by the door, whistled sweet mimicry of the cheep of the little chickens in the back yard, and hopped to and fro and up and down on his perches, pecking at the red chili between the bars. From the corner of his eyes he could peek into the window, and it was bright with potted geraniums, white as the wall, or red as the chili, or pink as the little crumpled palm that patted against the glass to him.

He whistled more cheerily yet when he saw that small hand. He was a tame mocking-bird, and he had learned to eat dead flies from it. That was one of the greatest treats of his highly satisfactory life. The hand left the window and presently waved from the doorway.

The Reverend Taylor stood there with his son in his arms. The mocking-bird trilled out a laugh to the evening air. It was irresistible, so droll that even a bird must know it, — the likeness between the little father and the little son. There was the same big head and the big ears and the big eyes and the body

that was too small for them all, a little, thin body, active and quivering with energy. There were the very same wrinkles about the baby's lids, crinkles of good humor and kindly tolerance, and the very same tufts of hair running the wrong way and sticking out at the temples.

The tufts were fuzzy yellow instead of gray, and the miniature face had not yet grown tanned and hard with the wind and the sun, but those were mere details. The general effect was perfect. There was no mistaking that the lively fraction of humanity in the Reverend Taylor's arms was the little Reverend. That was the only name he went by, though he had been christened properly on the day he was six months old, Joshua for his father and Randolph for his mother, in memory of Virginia, and her own long maidenhood. She was herself a Randolph, and she wanted the fact perpetuated. But in Tombstone, Joshua Randolph Taylor was simply the little Reverend.

The little Reverend was the first thing on earth to his father. For the wife had made that step in advance, which is yet a step in descent in a woman's life, when she becomes to her husband less herself than the mother of his child.

The Reverend Taylor grabbed at a fly and caught it in his palm. He had become very expert at this, to his wife's admiration and his son's keen delight. It was because the little Reverend liked to see him do it, and derived so much elfish enjoyment from the trick, that he had perfected himself in it. He gave the

crushed fly to the baby, and held him up to feed the bird. The bird put its head through the bars and pecked with its whiskered bill, and the little Reverend gurgled joyfully, his small face wrinkling up in a way which was really not pretty, but which his father thought the most engaging expression in the world.

The puppy which had been born the same day as the little Reverend, a beast half coyote, half shepherd, and wholly hideous, came and sat itself down beside them on the sill, looked up with its tongue hanging out to one side, and smiled widely. The beaming good nature of the two Reverends was infectious. The baby squealed gleefully, and kicked until it was set down on the door-step to pat the dog.

Presently the nurse came, a big, fat Mexican woman, with all her people's love of children showing on her moon face as she put out her arms. She had been with the Taylors since before the baby's birth, and she had more of its affection than the mother.

The little Reverend understood only Spanish, and his few words, pronounced with a precision altogether in keeping with his appearance, were Spanish ones. The old nurse murmured softly, as she took him up, "*Quieres leche hombrecito, quieres cenar? El chuchu tiene hambre tambien. Vamos á ver mamá.*"

The little Reverend was not to be blandished. He was willing to go because it was his supper time and he knew it, but the big-eyed look of understanding he turned up to the gentle, fat face said plainly enough that he was too wise a creature to be wheedled. He sub-

mitted to be carried in, but he cast a regretful glance at the "chuchu," which sat still in the doorway, and at his father, who was watching the line of flying ants making their way, a stream of red bodies and sizzing white wings, out of the window and across the street.

They had been doing that for three days. They came down the chimney, made across the floor in a line that never changed direction, nor straggled, nor lessened, up the wall and out a crack in the window. They did no harm, but followed blindly on in the path the first one had taken. And the minister had said they should not be smoked back or thwarted.

The little Reverend had been much interested in them also. He had sat for several hours sucking an empty spool, and observing them narrowly, in perfect silence. His father had great hopes of him as a naturalist.

Finally the minister raised his eyes and looked down the street. It was almost empty, save for two men in high-heeled top boots and sombreros who sat in chairs tilted back against the post-office wall, meditating in mutual silence. The only sounds were the rattling of dishes over in his mother-in-law's restaurant across the street, and the sleepy cheeping of the little chickens in his own back yard, as they cuddled under their mother's wing.

The Reverend Taylor was about to go to the coops and close them for the night, when he saw a man and a woman on horseback coming up the street. The woman was bending forward and swaying in her saddle. He stood still and watched. The red sunset

blaze was in his face so that he could not see plainly until they were quite near. Then he knew that it was Cairness and — yes, beyond a doubt — Bill Lawton's runaway wife.

They halted in front of him, and the woman swayed again, so much that he ran to her side. But she righted herself fiercely. Cairness was dismounted and was beside her, too, in an instant. He lifted her from the horse, pulled her down, more or less; she was much too ungainly to handle with any grace.

"May I take her in?" he said, nodding toward the open door.

"Surely," said the minister, "surely." There might have been men who would have remembered that Mrs. Lawton was a tough woman, even for a mining town, and who would in the names of their own wives have refused to let her cross the threshold of their homes. But he saw that she was ill, and he did not so much as hesitate.

Cairness put his arm around the big angular shoulders and helped her into the sitting room. She dropped down upon the sofa, and sat there, her head hanging, but in sullenness, not humility.

Mrs. Taylor came to the dining-room door and looked in. "Can I do anything?" she asked.

"Come in," said her husband. He was pouring out a drink of whiskey.

She came and stood watching, asking no questions, while the woman on the sofa gulped down the raw whiskey and gave back the glass.

Cairness had gone out to hitch the horses. When he came in he spoke to Mrs. Lawton, as one possessed of authority. He told her to lie down if she wanted to. "With your leave, Mrs. Taylor?" he added. Mrs. Taylor was already beside her, fussing kindly and being met with scant courtesy.

Cairness took the Reverend Taylor to the door. "You know that is Bill Lawton's wife?" he said.

Taylor nodded.

"The one who sloped with the Greaser?"

The parson nodded again.

"Do you object to taking her into your house for a short time?"

The Reverend Taylor did not object.

"And your wife?"

"She will shrink, I guess, at first," he admitted. "Women who ain't seen much of life kind of think they ought to draw aside their skirts, and all that. They were taught copy-book morals about touching pitch, I reckon," — he was wise concerning women now — "and it takes a good deal of hard experience to teach them that it ain't so. But she'll take my word for it."

"She is ill, you see?"

The parson had seen.

"She may be ill some time. Would it be asking too much of you to look after her?" The bachelor showed in that.

Taylor realized from the Benedict's greater knowledge that it was asking a great deal, but still not

too much. He assured Cairness that she should be cared for.

"She was a captive among the Chiricahuas up in the Sierra Madre. She's had a hard time of it. That and the return march have been too much for her."

The parson expressed pity — and felt it, which is more.

"Yes," Cairness said, "of course it's hard luck, but she's deserved it all, and more too. You may as well know the whole thing now. It's only fair. She and her husband were the cause of the Kirby massacre. Drove off the stock from the corrals and left them no escape."

His teeth set. The little man gasped audibly. "Good God!" he said, "I —" he stopped.

"I rather thought that might be too much for even you," said Cairness.

"No, no; it's a good deal, but it ain't too much. Not that it could be more, very well," he added, and he glanced furtively at the woman within, who had stretched out on the lounge with her face to the wall. Mrs. Taylor was fanning her.

"You will still keep her then?" Cairness wished to know.

He would still keep her, yes. But he did not see that it would be in the least necessary to tell his wife the whole of the woman's iniquity. It took quite all his courage, after they had gotten her safely in bed, to remind her that this was the same woman who had gone off with the Mexican.

Mrs. Taylor folded her hands in her lap, and simply looked at him.

"Well?" said he, questioningly, setting his mouth. It answered to the duellist's "On guard!" She had seen him set his mouth before, and she knew that it meant that he was not to be opposed. Nevertheless there was a principle involved now. It must be fought for. And it would be the first fight of their marriage, too. As he had told Cairness once, she was very amiable.

"Well," she answered, "I think you have done an unspeakable thing, that is all."

"Such as —"

"To have brought an abandoned woman into our home."

"If her presence blackens the walls, we will have them whitewashed."

But she was not to be turned off with levity. It was a serious matter, involving consequences of the sternest sort. Mrs. Taylor was of the class of minds which holds that just such laxities as this strike at the root of society. "It is not a joke, Joshua. She pollutes our home."

"Are you afraid she will contaminate me?" he asked. He was peering at her over the top of a newspaper.

She denied the idea emphatically.

"Baby, then?"

Equally absurd.

"Or the nurse?"

It was too foolish to answer.

"Then," said the Reverend Taylor, laying down the paper, "you must be scared for yourself."

"Never!" she declared; it was merely because she could not breathe the same air with that creature.

"I wonder, my dear, what sort of air you breathed in your mother's restaurant at meal times?"

Mrs. Taylor was silent. Her pop blue eyes shifted.

"Trouble is," he went on evenly, "trouble is, that, like most women, you've been brought up to take copy-book sentiments about touchin' pitch, and all that, literal. You don't stop to remember that to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man. If she can't do you any harm spiritually, she certainly ain't got the strength to do it physically. I can't say as I'd like to have her about the place all the time unless she was going to reform, — and I don't take much stock in change of heart, with her sort, — because she wouldn't be a pleasant companion, and it ain't well to countenance vice. But while she's sick, and it will oblige Cairness, she can have the shelter of my manta. You think so too, now, don't you?" he soothed.

But she was not sure that she thought so. She wanted to know why the woman could not be sent to the hotel, and he explained that Cairness wished a very close watch kept on her until she was able to be up. Curiosity got the better of outraged virtue then. "Why?" she asked, and leaned forward eagerly.

But the Reverend Taylor's lips set again, and he shrugged his narrow shoulders. "I'm not certain myself," he said shortly.

An eminent student of the sex has somewhere said that women are like monkeys, in that they are imitative. The comparison goes further. There is a certain inability in a monkey to follow out a train of thought, or of action, to its conclusion, which is shared by the major part of womankind. It is a feminine characteristic to spend life and much energy on side issues. The lady forgot almost all about her original premise. She wished especially to know that which no power upon earth would induce her lord to tell.

He took up his paper again. "He ain't told me the whole thing yet," he said.

She wished to hear as much as he had confided.

The Reverend Taylor shook his head. "I may tell you sometime, but not now. In the meanwhile I'm sure you think we had better keep Mrs. Lawton here, don't you now?"

She did not. She would as lief touch a toad.

"Ain't it funny how narrow-minded some good women can be, though?" he speculated, looking at her very much as he was in the habit of looking at his specimens. And he quoted slowly, as if he were saying over the names and family characteristics of a specimen.

"'And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' I wonder how many women who have lived up to every word of the Decalogue have made it all profitless for want of a little charity?"

She asked, with the flat Virginia accent of the vowels,

if he would like her to go and embrace the woman, and request her to make their home henceforth her own.

"No," he said, "I wouldn't like you to, and she wouldn't want it, I reckon." He dropped back into his usual speech. "She ain't any repentant sinner, by a good deal. But as Cairness wants me to keep an eye on her, and as she's sick, I wish you to let her stay in the house, and not to make a rumpus about it. If you really don't like to go near her, though," he finished, "I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll take her in her food myself, and nurse can clean out her room."

Perhaps the Scripture texts had taught their lesson, or perhaps there yet lingered a hope of learning that which her husband would not tell. Anyway, for the week which the woman lay on the cot in the little whitewashed chamber, which had no outlet save through the sitting room where some one was always on guard night and day, Mrs. Taylor served her with a good enough grace.

When she was able to be up, Cairness went in to see her. She was sitting on a chair, and looking sulkily out of the window. "You got me jailed all right," she sneered, "ain't you?" and she motioned to the grating of iron.

"You can go whenever you like now," Cairness told her. She demanded to know where she was to go to, and he answered that that was not his affair, but that he would suggest a safe distance. "Somebody else getting hold of the truth of the Kirby business mightn't be so easy on you as I am."

"How do I know you're done with me yet?" she snapped.

He told her that she didn't know it, because he was not; and then he explained to her. "What I want of you now is for you to come over with Taylor and me to see Stone."

She jumped to her feet. "I ain't going to do it."

"Yes," he assured her unmoved, "you are. At least you are going to do that, or go to jail."

"What do you want me to say to Stone?"

"Nothing much," he told her. He and Taylor could take care of the talking. Her part would be just to stand by and pay attention.

"And after that?"

"After that, as I said before, you may go."

He suggested that the sooner she felt that she could go the better, as she had been a good deal of a burden to the Taylors.

She laughed scornfully. "It ain't me that asked them to take me in," she said; "I'm as glad to go as they are to have me." She wore a calico wrapper that Cairness had bought for her, and other garments that had been gathered together in the town. Now she put a battered sombrero on her head, and told him she was ready.

He and the parson followed her out of the house. She had not cared to say good-by to Mrs. Taylor, and she glared at the little Reverend, who balanced himself on his uncertain small feet and clutched at a chair, watching her with his precocious eyes and an expression combined of his mother's virtuous disapproval

and his father's contemplative scrutiny, the while the tufts of his hair stood out stiffly.

The Reverend Taylor and Cairness had managed, with a good deal of adroitness, to keep the identity of their patient a secret. Stone was consequently not at all prepared to have her stride in upon him. But he was not a man to be caught exhibiting emotions. The surprise which he showed and expressed was of a perfectly frank and civil, even of a somewhat pleased, sort. He called her "my dear madam," and placed a chair for her. She sat in it under protest. He kept up the social aspect of it all for quite five minutes, but sociability implies conversation, and Cairness and the minister were silent. So was the woman — rigidly.

When all his phrases were quite used up, Stone changed the key. What could be done for Mr. Taylor? Mr. Taylor motioned with his usual urbanity that the burden of speech lay with Cairness. What could he do for Mr. Cairness, then?

"Well," said Cairness, twisting at the small mustache, and levelling his eyes straight as the barrels of a shot-gun — and they gave the journalist a little of the same sensation — "I think, Mr. Stone, that you can get out of the country within the next three days."

Stone did not understand. He believed that he missed Mr. Cairness's meaning. "I don't think you do," said Cairness; "but I'll make it plainer, anyway. I want you to get out of the country, for the country's good, you know, and for your own. And I give you

three days to do it in, because I don't wish to hurry you to an inconvenient extent."

Stone laughed and inquired if he were joking, or just crazy.

"Neither," drawled Cairness. "But Mrs. Lawton, here, has been good enough to tell me that you have known the exact truth about the Kirby massacre ever since a week after its occurrence, and yet you have shielded the criminals and lied in the papers. Then, too," he went on, "though there is no real proof against you, and you undoubtedly did handle it very well, I know that it was you that set Lawton on to try and bribe for the beef contract. You see your friends are unsafe, Mr. Stone, and I have been around yours and Lawton's ranches enough to have picked up a few damaging facts."

"Always supposing you have," interposed Stone, hooking his thumbs in his sleeve holes and tipping back his chair, "always supposing you have, what could you do with the facts?"

"Well," drawled Cairness again, — he had learned the value of the word in playing the Yankee game of bluff, — "with those about the beef contract and those about the Kirby massacre, also a few I gathered around San Carlos (you may not be aware that I have been about that reservation off and on for ten years), with those facts I could put you in the penitentiary, perhaps, even with an Arizona jury; but at any rate I could get you tarred and feathered or lynched in about a day. Or failing all those, I could shoot you myself.

And a jury would acquit me, you know, if any one were ever to take the trouble to bring it before one, which is doubtful, I think."

Stone glanced at the Lawton woman. She was grinning mirthlessly at his discomfiture. "What have you been stuffing this fellow here with?" he asked her contemptuously.

"Just what he's dishin' up to you now," she told him.

"It's a lot of infernal lies, and you know it." But she only shook her head and laughed again, shortly.

Stone made a very creditable fight. A man does not throw up the results of years of work without a strong protest. He treated it lightly, at first, then seriously. Then he threatened. "I've got a good deal of power myself," he told Cairness angrily; "I can roast you in the press so that you can't hold up your head."

"I don't believe you can," Cairness said; "but you might try it, if it will give you any pleasure. Only you must make haste, because you've got to get out in three days."

"I can shoot, myself, when it comes to that," suggested Stone.

Cairness said that he would of course have to take chances on that. "You might kill me, or I might kill you. I'm a pretty fair shot. However, it wouldn't pay you to kill me, upon the whole, and you must take everything into consideration." He was still twisting the curled end of his small mustache and half closing his eyes in the way that Stone had long since set down

as asinine. "My friend Mr. Taylor would still be alive. And if you were to hurt him, — he's a very popular man, — it might be bad for your standing in the community. It wouldn't hurt me to kill you, particularly, on the other hand. You are not so popular anyway, and I haven't very much to lose."

Then the journalist tried entreaty. He had a wife and children.

Cairness reminded him that Kirby had had a wife and children, too.

"Well, I didn't kill them, did I?" he whined.

"Not exactly, no. But you were an accessory after the fact."

"Why are you so all-fired anxious to vindicate the law?" He dropped easily into phrases.

Cairness assured him that he was not. "It is not my mission on earth to straighten out the territories, heaven be praised. This is purely a personal matter, entirely so. You may call it revenge, if you like. Lawton's in jail all safe, as you know. I got him there, and if he gets out anyway, I'll put him back again on this count."

Mrs. Lawton started forward in her chair. "What's he in for now? Ain't it for this?" she demanded.

"For destruction of government property," Cairness told her, and there was just the faintest twinkle between his lids. "I didn't know all these interesting details about the Kirbys until you told me, Mrs. Lawton."

She sat with her jaw hanging, staring at him, baffled,

and he went on. "I've got Lawton jailed, as I was saying. I'll have you out of the country in three days, and as for Mrs. Lawton, I'll keep an eye on her. I'll know where she is, in case I need her at any time. But I'm not fighting women."

He stood up. "I'll see you off inside of three days then, Stone," he said amicably.

"Where do you want me to go?" he almost moaned, and finished with an oath.

"Anywhere you like, my dear chap, so that it's neither in Arizona or New Mexico. I want to stop here myself, and the place isn't big enough for us both. You'll be a valuable acquisition to any community, and you can turn your talent to showing up the life here. You are right on the inside track. Now I won't ask you to promise to go. But I'll be round to see that you do."

He held the door open for the Texan woman and the parson to go out. Then he followed, closing it behind him.

Two days later Stone left the town. He took the train for California, and his wife and children went with him. He was a rich man by many an evil means, and it was no real hardship that had been worked him, as Cairness well knew.

The Lawton woman had heard of an officer's family at Grant, which was in need of a cook, and had gone there.

"And now," said the Reverend Taylor, fingering the lock of hair over the little Reverend's right ear,

as that wise little owl considered with uncertain approval a whistle rattle Cairness had bought for him, "and now what are you going to do?"

Cairness stood up, ran his hands into his pockets, and going over to the window looked down at the geraniums as he had done once, long before.

"I am going back to my ranch on the reservation," he said measuredly.

"Cairness," said the parson, fixing his eyes upon the back of the bent head, as if they were trying to see through into the impenetrable brain beneath, "are you going to spend the rest of your life at this sort of thing?"

"I don't know," Cairness answered, with a lightness that was anything but cheering.

"You are too good for it."

"I am certainly not good enough for anything else." He began to whistle, but it was not a success, and he stopped.

"See here," insisted Taylor; "turn round here and answer me." Cairness continued to stand with his head down, looking at the geraniums. The parson was wiser than his wife in that he knew when it was of no use to insist. "What's keeping you around here, anyway? You ought to have gotten out when you left the service — and you half meant to then. What is it?"

Cairness raised his shoulders. "My mines," he said, after a while. The Reverend Taylor did not believe that, but he let it go.

"Well," he said more easily, "you've accomplished the thing you set out to do, anyway."

"One thing," muttered Cairness.

"Eh?" the parson was not sure he had heard.

"Just nothing," Cairness laughed shortly, and breaking off one of the treasured geranium blossoms, stuck it in a buttonhole of his flannel shirt.

"I heard you," said the little man; "what's the other?"—"Oh, I dare say I'll fail on that," he answered indifferently, and taking up his sombrero went out to saddle his horse.

XXI

The civilization of the Englishman is only skin deep. And therein lies his strength and his salvation. Beneath that outer surface, tubbed and groomed and prosperous, there is the man, raw and crude from the workshops of Creation. Back of that brain, trained to a nicety of balance and perception and judgment, there are the illogical passions of a savage. An adaptation of the proverb might run that you scratch an Englishman and you find a Briton — one of those same Britons who stained themselves blue with woad, who fell upon their foes with clumsy swords and flaming torches, who wore the skins of beasts, and lived in huts of straw, and who burned men and animals together, in sacrifice to their gods.

And the savage shows, too, in that your Englishman is not gregarious. His house is his castle, his life is to himself, and his sentiments are locked within him. He is a lonely creature, in the midst of his kind, and he loves his loneliness.

But it is because of just this that no scion of ultra-civilization degenerates so thoroughly as does he. Retrogression is easy to him. He can hardly go higher, because he is on the height already; but he can slip back. Set him in a lower civilization, he sinks one degree

lower than that. Put him among savages, and he is nearer the beasts than they. It does not come to pass in a day, nor yet at all if he be part of a community, which keeps in mind its traditions and its church, and which forms its own public opinion. Then he is the leaven of all the measures of meal about him, the surest, steadiest, most irresistible civilizing force. But he cannot advance alone. He goes back, and, being cursed with the wisdom which shows him his debasement, in loathing and disgust with himself, he grows sullen and falls back yet more.

It was so with Cairness. He was sinking down, and ever down, to the level of his surroundings; he was even ceasing to realize that it was so. He had begun by studying the life of the savages, but he was so entirely grasping their point of view that he was losing all other. He was not so dirty as they — not yet. His stone cabin was clean enough, and their villages were squalid. A morning plunge in the river was still a necessity, while with them it was an event. But where he had once spent his leisure in reading in several tongues — in keeping in touch with the world — and in painting, he would now sit for hours looking before him into space, thinking unprofitable thoughts. He lived from hand to mouth. Eventually he would without doubt marry a squaw. The thing was more than common upon the frontier.

He was in a manner forgetting Felipa. He had forced himself to try to do so. But once in a way he remembered her vividly, so that the blood would burn in his heart and head, and he would start up and beat off the

thought, as if it were a visible thing. It was happening less and less often, however. For two years he had not seen her and had heard of her directly only once. An officer who came into the Agency had been with her, but having no reason to suppose that a scout could be interested in the details of the private life of an officer's wife, he had merely said that she had been very ill, but was better now. He had not seen fit to add that it was said in the garrison — which observed all things with a microscopic eye — that she was very unhappy with Landor, and that the sympathy was not all with her.

"Mrs. Landor is very beautiful," Cairness hazarded. He wanted to talk of her, or to make some one else do it.

"She is very magnificent," said the officer, coldly. It was plain that magnificence was not what he admired in woman. And there it had dropped.

Cairness remembered with an anger and disgust with himself he could still feel, that last time he had seen her in the mouth of the cave. That had been two springs ago. Since then there had been no occupation for him as a guide or scout. The country had been at peace. The War Department and the Indian Department were dividing the control of the Agency, with the War Department ranking. Crook had been trying his theories as practice. He had been demonstrating that the Indian can work, with a degree of success that was highly displeasing to the class of politicians whose whole social fabric for the southwest rested on his only being able to kill.

But the star of the politician was once more in the ascendant. For two years there had been not one depredation, not one outrage from the Indians, for whose good conduct the general had given his personal word. They were self-supporting, and from the products of their farms they not only kept themselves, but supplied the neighboring towns. It was a state of affairs entirely unsatisfactory to the politician. So he set about correcting it.

His methods were explained to Cairness by an old buck who slouched up to the cabin and sat himself down cross-legged in front of the door. He meant to share in the venison breakfast Cairness was getting himself.

"So long as these stones of your house shall remain one upon the other," began the Apache, "so long shall I be your friend. Have you any tobacco?" Cairness went into the cabin, got a pouch, and tossed it to him. He took a package of straw papers and a match from somewhere about himself and rolled a cigarette deftly.

"I have been lied to," came the muttering voice from the folds of the red I. D. blanket, which almost met the red flannel band binding down his coarse and dirty black hair. It was early dawn and cold. Cairness himself was close to the brush fire.

"I have been cheated."

Cairness nodded. He thought it very likely.

"The Sun and the Darkness and the Winds were all listening. He promised to pay me *dos reales* each day. To prove to you that I am now telling the truth,

here is what he wrote for me." He held it out to Cairness, a dirty scrap of wrapping-paper scrawled over with senseless words.

"Yes," said Cairness, examining it, "but this has no meaning."

"That is a promise," the Indian insisted, "to pay me *dos reales* a day if I would cut hay for him."

The White explained carefully that it was not a contract, that it was nothing at all, in fact.

"Then he lied," said the buck, and tucked the scrap back under his head band. "They all lie. I worked for him two weeks. I worked hard. And each night when I asked him for money he would say to me that to-morrow he would pay me. When all his hay was cut he laughed in my face. He would pay me nothing." He seemed resigned enough about it.

Cairness gave a grunt that was startlingly savage — so much so that he realized it, and shook himself slightly as a man does who is trying to shake himself free from a lethargy that is stealing over him.

"And then, there was the trouble about the cows. They promised us one thousand, and they gave us not quite six hundred. And those — the Dawn and the Sky hear that what I tell you is true — and those were so old we could not use them."

Cairness nodded. He knew that the Interior Department had sent an agent out to investigate that complaint, and that the agent had gone his way rejoicing and reporting that all was well with the Indian and honest with the contractor. It was not true. Every

one who knew anything about it knew that. Cairness supposed that also was the work of the politicians. But there are things one cannot make plain to a savage having no notions of government.

The buck went on, the while he held a piece of venison in his dirty hand and dragged at it with his teeth, to say that there was a feeling of great uneasiness upon the reservation.

The Chiricahuas could see that there was trouble between the officials, both military and civil, and the government. They did not know what it was. They did not understand that the harassed general, whose word — and his alone — had their entire belief, nagged and thwarted, given authority and then prevented from enforcing it, had rebelled at last, had asked to be relieved, and had been refused. But they drew in with delight the air of strife and unrest. It was the one they loved best, there could and can be no doubt about that.

"Geronimo," mumbled the Apache, "has prayed to the Dawn and the Darkness and the Sun and the Sky to help him put a stop to those bad stories that people put in the papers about him. He is afraid it will be done as they say." The press of the country was full just then, and had been for some time past, of suggestions that the only good use the much-feared Geronimo could be put to would be hanging, the which he no doubt richly deserved. But if every one in the territories who deserved hanging had been given his dues, the land would have been dotted with blasted trees.

"Geronimo does not want that any more. He has

tried to do right. He is not thinking bad. Such stories ought not to be put in the newspapers."

Cairness also thought that they should not, chiefly because they had a tendency to frighten the timid Apaches. But he went on quietly eating his breakfast, and said nothing. He knew that only silence can obtain loquacity from silent natures. He was holding his meat in his fingers, too, and biting it, though he did not drag it like a wild beast yet; and, moreover, he had it upon a piece of bread of his own baking.

"There will be trouble with Geronimo's people soon."

"Shall you go with them?" asked Cairness.

"No, I am a friend of the soldier. And I am a friend of Chato, who is the enemy of Geronimo. I have no bad thoughts," he added piously.

"And you think there will be trouble?" He knew that the buck had come there for nothing but to inform.

"I think that Geronimo will make trouble. He knows that the agent and the soldiers are quarrelling, and he and his people have been drinking tizwin for many days."

Cairness stood up and walked down to the water to wash his hands. Then he went into the cabin and brought out a small mirror, and all the shaving apparatus he had not used for months, and proceeded to take off his thick brown beard, while the Indian sat stolidly watching him with that deep interest in trifles of the primitive brain, which sees and marks, and fails to learn or to profit correspondingly.

And later in the day, when the buck had shuffled off again, Cairness brought out his pony, — a new one now, for the little pinto one had died of a rattlesnake bite, from which no golondrina weed had been able to save it, — and saddled it. Then he went again into the cabin. There was but one thing there that he valued, — a life-size head of Felipa he had done in charcoal. It was in a chest beneath his cot. He locked his chest, and going out locked the door also, and putting both keys upon a ring, mounted and rode off along the trail.

It was his intention to go to Crook and to warn him if he needed warning, which was not probable, since he was never napping. He would then offer his services as a scout. He was sincerely attached to the general, and felt his own career in a way involved with that of the officer, because he had been with him, in one capacity or another, in every campaign he had made in the southwest.

Already he felt more respectable at the mere prospect of contact with his kind again. He was glad that the unkempt beard was gone, and he was allowing himself to hope, no, he was deliberately hoping, that he would see Felipa.

XXII

He failed in the warning. He had barely gotten off the reservation before Geronimo and Nachez and their sympathizers broke out and started to reach again that fastness in the Sierra Madre from which they had been routed two years before. But he succeeded without the least difficulty in obtaining the position of chief of scouts.

And he succeeded in seeing Felipa. It was most unexpected. He had believed her to be in Stanton, a good many hundred miles away. But Landor having been sent at once into the field, she had come on to Grant to visit the Campbells, who were again stationed there. He met her face to face only once, and he measured with one quick look all the changes there were between the girl of ten years before and the woman of to-day. The great, sad pity that rose within him, and seemed to grasp at his throat chokingly, was the best love he had felt for her yet. It wiped out the wrong of the short madness in the cave's mouth.

She was quite alone, wandering among the trees and bushes in the creek bottom, and her hands were full of wild flowers. She had pinned several long sprays of the little ground blossoms, called "baby-blue eyes," at her throat, and they lay along her white gown prettily.

She stopped and spoke to him, with a note of lifelessness in her high, sweet voice; and while he answered her question as to what he had been doing since she had seen him last, she unpinned the "baby-blue eyes" and held them out to him. "Would you like these?" she asked simply. He took them, and she said "Good-by" and went on.

She was broken to the acceptance of the inevitable now, — he could see that, any one could see it. She had learned the lesson of the ages — the futility of struggle of mere man against the advance of men. That it had been a hard lesson was plain. It showed in her face, where patience had given place to unrest, gentleness to the defiance of freedom. She had gained, too, she had gained greatly. She was not only woman now, she was womanly. But Cairness did not need to be told that she was not happy.

He went on the next day with his scouts, and eventually joined Landor in the field. Landor was much the same as ever, only more gray and rather more deeply lined. Perhaps he was more taciturn, too, for beyond necessary orders he threw not one word to the chief of scouts. Cairness could understand that the sight of himself was naturally an exasperation, and in some manner a reproach, too. He was sorry that he had been thrown with this command, but, since he was, it was better that Landor should behave as he was doing. An assumption of friendliness would have been a mockery, and to some extent an ignoble one.

Landor's troop, with one other, was in the San

Andres Mountains of New Mexico when Cairness joined it. They were on the trail of a large band of renegades, and it led them through the mountains, across the flats, and down to the lava beds.

Once in the æons which will never unfold their secrets now, when the continent of the Western seas was undreamed of by the sages and the philosophers of the Eastern world, when it was as alone, surrounded by its wide waters, as the planets are alone in their wastes of space, when it was living its own life, — which was to leave no trace upon the scroll of the wisdom of the ages, — the mountains and the bowels of the earth melted before the wrath of that same Lord whose voice shook the wilderness of Judæa. At His bidding they ran as water, and poured down in waves of seething fire, across the valley of death.

It is a valley of death now, parched and desolate, a waste of white sand — the dry bone dust of the cycles. But then, when the lava came surging and boiling and flaming across the plain, not a thin stream, but a wide, irresistible current, there was life; there was a city — one city at least. It is there now, under the mass of sharp, gray, porous rock; how much of it no one knows. But it is there, and it has given up its unavailing hints of a life which may have been older than that of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and is as much more safely hidden from the research of the inquiring day as its walls are more hopelessly buried beneath the ironlike stone than are those of the cisalpine cities beneath their ashen drift.

And the great river of rock is there, too, frozen upon the land like some devouring monster changed by a Gorgon head into lifeless stone. It is a formidable barrier across the hardly less formidable bad lands. It can be crossed in places where it is narrowest, not quite a mile in width, that is. But horses slip and clamber, and men cut through the leather of their heaviest shoes.

If the sea, whipping in huge waves against the fury of a typhoon, were to become on the instant rocks, it would be as this. There are heights and crevasses, hills and gulches, crests and hollows, little caves and crannies, where quail and snakes and cotton-tails and jack-rabbits, lizards and coyotes, creatures of desolation and the barrens, hide and scamper in and out. It is an impregnable stronghold, not for armies, because they could not find shelter, but for savages that can scatter like the quail themselves, and writhe on their bellies into the coyotes' own holes.

And so the hostiles took shelter there from the cavalry that had pursued them hard across the open all night, and gave battle after the manner of their kind. It was a very desultory sort of a skirmish, for the troops did not venture into the traps beyond the very edge, and the Indians were simply on the defensive. It was not only desultory, it promised to be unavailing, a waste of time and of ammunition.

The Chiricahuas might stay there and fire at intervals as long as they listed, killing a few men perhaps. And then they might retreat quite safely, putting the barrier

between themselves and the pursuers. Obviously there were only two courses wherein lay any wisdom, — to retreat, or to cut off their retreat. Landor said so to the major in command.

"And how, may I ask, would you suggest cutting off their retreat?" the major inquired a little sharply. His temper was not improved by the heat and by twelve hours in the saddle.

It was certainly not apparent, on the face of it, how the thing was to be done, but the captain explained. "I've been stationed here, you know, and I know the roads. We are about a half a mile or more from where the Stanton road to the railway crosses the lava. It is narrow and rough, and about from three-quarters of a mile to a mile wide, but cavalry can go over it without any trouble. I can take my troop over, and then the Indians will be hemmed in between us. We might capture the whole band."

The major offered the objection that it would be foolhardy, that it would be cutting through the enemy by file. "They'll pick you off, and you'll be absolutely at their mercy," he remonstrated. "No, I can't hear of it."

"Suppose you let me call for volunteers," suggested Landor. He was sure of his own men, down to the last recruit.

The major consented unwillingly. "It's your lookout. If you come out alive, I shall be surprised, that's all. Take some scouts, too," he added, as he lit a cigar and went on with his walk up and down among his men.

The entire command volunteered, as a matter of course, and Landor had his pick. He took thirty men and a dozen scouts. Cairness rode up and offered himself. They looked each other full in the face for a moment. "Very well," said Landor, and turned on his heel. Cairness was properly appreciative, despite the incivility. He knew that Landor could have refused as well as not, and that would have annoyed and mortified him. He was a generous enemy, at any rate. The volunteers mounted and trotted off in a cloud of dust that hung above them and back along their trail, to where the road, as Landor had said, entered the malpais.

Just at the edge of the rock stream there was an abandoned cabin built of small stones. Whatever sort of roof it had had in the beginning was now gone altogether, and the cabin itself was tumbling down. Through the doorway where there was no door, there showed a blackened fireplace. Once when a party from the post had been taking the two days' drive to the railroad, they had stopped here, and had lunched in the cabin. Landor remembered it now, and glanced at the place where Felipa had reclined in the shade of the walls, upon the leather cushion of the ambulance seat. She very rarely could be moved to sing, though she had a sweet, plaintive voice of small volume; but this time she had raised her tin mug of beer and, looking up to the blue sky, had launched into the "Last Carouse," in a spirit of light mockery that fitted with it well, changing the words a little to the scene.

"We meet 'neath the blazing heavens,
And the walls around are bare;
They shout back our peals of laughter,
And it seems that the dead are there.
Then stand to your glasses steady,
We drink to our comrades' eyes
One cup to the dead already.
Hurrah! for the next that dies."

"Hurrah! for the next that dies," thought Landor himself, with a careless cynicism. The barrel of a Winchester gleamed above a point of rock, a little sharp sparkle of sunlight on steel, and a bullet deflected from the big leather hood of his stirrup. He rode on calmly, and his horse's shoes clicked on the lava.

The men followed, sitting erect, toes in. They might have been on mounted inspection except for the field clothes, stained and dusty. They were to go down a narrow path for close on a mile, between two rows of rifle barrels, and that not at a run or a gallop, but at a trot, at the most, for the lava was slippery as glass in spots. They were willing enough to do it, even anxious — not that there was any principle involved, or glory to be gained, but because their blood was up and it was part of the chances of the game.

They were not destined to get beyond the first fifty yards, nevertheless. The rifle that had fired at Landor as he came upon the malpais went glistening up again. There was a puff of blue-hearted smoke in the still air, and Cairness's bronco, struck on the flanks, stung to frenzy, stopped short, then gathering itself together with every quivering sinew in a knot, after the way of its

breed, bounded off straight in among the jagged boulders. It was all done in an instant, and almost before Landor could see who had dashed ahead of him the horse had fallen, neck to the ground, throwing its rider with his head against a point of stone.

Landor did not stop to consider it. It was one of the few impulses of his life, or perhaps only the quickest thinking he had ever done. Cairness was there among the rocks, disabled and in momentary danger of his life. If it had been a soldier, under the same circumstances, Landor might have gone on and have sent another soldier to help him. It was only a chief of scouts, but it was a man of his own kind, for all that— and it was his enemy. Instinct dismounted him before reason had time to warn him that the affair of an officer is not to succor his inferiors in the thick of the fighting when there are others who can be better spared to do it. He threw his reins over his horse's head and into the hands of the orderly-trumpeter, and jumped down beside Cairness.

When the sergeant reported it to the major afterward, he said that the captain, in stooping over to raise the chief of scouts, had been struck full in the temple by a bullet, and had pitched forward with his arms stretched out. One private had been wounded. They carried the two men back to the little cabin of stones, and that was the casualty list. But the dash had failed.

They laid Landor upon the ground, in the same patch of shade he had glanced at in coming by not five min-

utes before. His glazed eyes stared back at the sky. There was nothing to be done for him. But Cairness was alive. They washed the blood from his face with water out of the canteens, and bound his head with a wet handkerchief. And presently he came back to consciousness and saw Landor stretched there, with the bluing hole in his brow, and the quiet there is no mistaking on his sternly weary face. And he turned back his head and lay as ashy and almost as still as the dead man, with a look on his own face more terrible than that of any death.

After a time, when a soldier bent over him and held a flask to his teeth, he drank, and then he pointed feebly, and his lips framed the question he could not seem to speak.

The soldier understood. "Trying to save you, sir," he said a little resentfully.

But Cairness had known it without that. It was so entirely in keeping with the rest of his fate, that every cup which ought to have been sweet should have been embittered like this.

He rolled his cut and throbbing head over again, and watched the still form. And he was conscious of no satisfaction that now there was nothing in all the world to keep him from Felipa, from the gaining of the wish of many years, but only of a dull sort of pity for Landor and for himself, and of a real and deep regret.

XXIII

It was a splendid spring morning. There had been a shower overnight, and the whole mountain world was aglitter. The dancing, rustling leaves of the cottonwoods gleamed, the sparse grass of the parade ground was shining like tiny bayonets, the flag threw out its bright stripes to the breeze, and when the sun rays struck the visor of some forage cap, they glinted off as though it had been a mirror. All the post chickens were cackling and singing their droning monotonous song of contentment, the tiny ones cheeped and twittered, and in among the vines of the porch Felipa's mocking-bird whistled exultantly.

The sound shrilled sweetly through the house, through all the empty rooms, and through the thick silence of that one which was not empty, but where a flag was spread over a rough box of boards, and Ellton sat by the window with a little black prayer-book in his hand. He was going over the service for the burial of the dead, because there was no chaplain, and it fell to him to read it. Now and then one of the officers came in alone or with his wife and stood about aimlessly, then went away again. But for the rest, the house was quite forsaken.

Felipa was not there. At the earliest, she could not return for a couple of days, and by then Landor's body

would be laid in the dreary little graveyard, with its wooden headboards and crosses, and its neglected graves among the coyote and snake holes. The life of the service would be going on just as usual, after the little passing excitement was at an end. For it was an excitement. No one in the garrison would have had it end like this, but since what will be will be, and the right theory of life is to make the most of what offers and to hasten — as the philosopher has said — to laugh at all things for fear we may have cause to weep, there was a certain expectation, decently kept down, in the air.

It rose to a subdued pitch as there came the gradual rattling of wheels and the slow tramp of many feet. A buckboard, from which the seats had been removed, came up the line, and behind it marched the troops and companies, Landor's own troop in advance. They halted in front of his quarters, and four officers came down the steps with the long box between them. The mocking-bird's trill died away to a questioning twitter.

The box was laid in the buckboard, and covered with the flag once more. Then the mules started, with a rattle of traces and of the wheels, and the tramp of feet began again. The drums thrummed regularly and slowly, the heart beats of the service, and the fifes took up the dead march in a weird, shrill Banshee wail. They went down the line, the commandant with the surgeon and the officers first, and after them the buckboard, with its bright-draped burden. Then Landor's horse, covered with black cloths, the empty

saddle upon its back. It nosed at the pockets of the man who led it. It had been taught to find sugar in pockets. And then the troops, the cavalry with the yellow plumes of their helmets drooping, and the infantry with the spikes glinting, marching with eyes cast down and muskets reversed. A gap, then the soldiers' urchins from the laundress row, in for anything that might be doing.

The roll of the drums and the whistle of the fifes died away in the distance. There was a long silence, followed by three volleys of musketry, the salute over the open grave. And then taps was pealed in notes of brass up to the blue sky, a long farewell, a challenge aforetime to the trumpet of the Last Day. They turned and came marching back. The drums and fifes played "Yankee Doodle" in sarcastic relief. The men walked briskly with their guns at carry arms, the black-draped horse curved its neck and pranced until the empty stirrups danced. The incident was over — closed. The post picked up its life and went on. Two afternoons later the ambulance which had been sent for Felipa came into the post. She stepped out from it in front of the Elltons' quarters so majestic and awe-inspiring in her black garments that Mrs. Ellton was fairly subdued. She felt real grief. It showed in her white face and the nervous quiver of her lips. "I am going out to the graveyard," she told Mrs. Ellton almost at once. Mrs. Ellton prepared to accompany her, but she insisted that she was going alone, and did so, to the universal consternation.

In the late afternoon the lonely dark figure crossed the open and dropped down on the new grave, not in an agony of tears, but as if there was some comfort to be gotten out of contact with the mere soil. The old feeling of loneliness, which had always tinged her character with a covert defiance, was overwhelming her. She belonged to no one now. She had no people. She was an outcast from two races, feared of each because of the other's blood. The most forsaken man or woman may claim at least the kinship of his kind, but she had no kind. She crouched on the mound and looked at the sunset as she had looked that evening years before, but her eyes were not fearless now. As a trapped animal of the plains might watch a prairie fire licking nearer and nearer, making its slow way up to him in spurts of flame and in dull, thick clouds of smoke that must stifle him before long, so she watched the dreary future rolling in about her. But gradually the look changed to one farther away, and alight with hope. She had realized that there was, after all, some one to whom she belonged, some one to whom she could go and, for the first time in her life, be loved and allowed to love.

It had not occurred to her for some hours after Mrs. Campbell had told her of Landor's death that she was free now to give herself to Cairness. She had gasped, indeed, when she did remember it, and had put the thought away, angrily and self-reproachfully. But it returned now, and she felt that she might cling to it. She had been grateful, and she had been faithful, too.

She remembered only that Landor had been kind to her, and forgot that for the last two years she had borne with much harsh coldness, and with a sort of contempt which she felt in her unanalyzing mind to have been entirely unmerited. Gradually she raised herself until she sat quite erect by the side of the mound, the old exultation of her half-wild girlhood shining in her face as she planned the future, which only a few minutes before had seemed so hopeless.

And when the retreat gun boomed in the distance, she stood up, shaking the earth and grasses from her gown, and started to carry out her plans. A storm was blowing up again. Clouds were massing in the sky, and night was rising rather than the sun setting. There was a cold, greenish light above the snow peak, and darkness crept up from the earth and down from the gray clouds that banked upon the northern horizon and spread fast across the heavens. A bleak, whining wind rustled the leaves of the big trees down by the creek, and caught up the dust of the roadway in little eddies and whirls, as Felipa, with a new purpose in her step, swung along it back to the post.

She would not be induced to go near her own house that night. When Ellton suggested it, she turned white and horrified. It had not occurred to him before that a woman so fearless of everything in the known world might be in abject terror of the unknown.

"It's her nature," he told his wife. "Underneath she is an Apache, and they burn the wigwams and all the traps of their dead; sometimes even the whole vil-

lage he lived in." Mrs. Ellton said that poor Captain Landor had had a good deal to endure.

The two children whom Felipa had taken in charge two years before had been left in the care of the sergeant of Landor's troop and his wife, and they manifested no particular pleasure at seeing her again. They were half afraid of her, so severely black and tall and quiet. They had been playing with the soldier's children, and were anxious to be away again. The young of the human race are short of memory, and their gratefulness does not endure for long. There is no caress so sweet, so hard to win, as the touch of a child's soft hand, and none that has behind it less of nearly all that we prize in affection. It is sincere while it lasts, and no longer, and it must be bought either with a price or with a wealth of love. You may lavish the best that is within you to obtain a kiss from baby lips, and if they rest warm and moist upon your cheek for a moment, the next they are more eager for a sweetmeat than for all your adoration.

"Yes," whispered the little girl, squirming in Felipa's arms, "I am dlad you's come. Let me doe."

"Kiss me," said Felipa.

The child brushed at her cheek and struggled away. "Come, Billy," she called to the brother who had saved her life; and that small, freckle-faced hero, whose nose was badly skinned from a fall, flung his arms around his benefactress's neck perfunctorily and escaped, rejoicing.

The Elltons' pretty child was like its mother, gen-

tler and more caressing. It lay placidly in her arms and patted her lips when she tried to talk, with the tips of its rosy fingers. She caught them between her teeth and mumbled them, and the child chuckled gleefully. But by and by it was taken away to bed, and then Felipa was alone with its father and mother. Through the tiresome evening she felt oppressed and angrily nervous. The Elltons had always affected her so.

She asked for the full particulars of her husband's death, and when Ellton had told her, sat looking straight before her at the wall. "It was very like Jack," she said finally, in a low voice, "his whole life was like that." And then she turned squarely to the lieutenant. "Where is Mr. Cairness? Where did they take him?" She was surprised at herself that she had not thought of that before.

He told her that he had gone on to Arizona, to Tombstone, he believed. "By the way," he added, "did you hear that Brewster has married a rich Jewish widow down in Tucson?"

"Yes, I heard it," she said indifferently. "Was Mr. Cairness really much hurt?"

"Very much," said Ellton; "it was a sharp cut on the forehead — went through the bone, and he was unconscious, off and on, for two or three days. He seemed to take it hard. He went off yesterday, and he wasn't fit to travel either, but he would do it for some reason. I think he was worse cut up about Landor than anything, though he wasn't able to go to the funeral. I like

Cairness. He's an all-round decent fellow; but after all, his life was bought too dear."

Felipa did not answer.

He did not try to discuss her plans for the future with her that night; but two days afterward, when she had disposed of all her household goods and had packed the few things that remained, they sat upon two boxes in the bare hallway, resting; and he broached it.

"I am going to ask the quartermaster to store my things for the present, and of course the first sergeant's wife will look out for the children," she said.

But that was not exactly what he wanted to know, and he insisted. "But what is going to become of you? Are you going back to the Campbells?" He had asked her to stay with his wife and himself as long as she would, but she had refused.

"No," she said, "I told the Campbells I would not go to them."

And he could get nothing definite from her beyond that. It annoyed him, of course; Felipa had a gift for repulsing kindness and friendship. It was because she would not lie and could not evade. Therefore, she preserved a silence that was, to say the least of it, exasperating to the well-intentioned.

Early in the morning of the day she was to leave she went to the graveyard alone again. She was beginning to realize more than she had at first that Landor was quite gone. She missed him, in a way. He had been a strong influence in her life, and there was a lack of the pressure now. But despite the form of religion to

which she clung, she had no hope of meeting him in any future life, and no real wish to do so.

She stood by the mound for a little while thinking of him, of how well he had lived and died, true to his standard of duty, absolutely true, but lacking after all that spirit of love without which our actions profit so little and die with our death. She had a clearer realization of it than ever before. It came to her that Charles Cairness's life, wandering, aimless, disjointed as it was, and her own, though it fell far below even her own not impossibly high ideals, were to more purpose, had in them more of the vital force of creation, were less wasted, than his had been. To have known no enthusiasms — which are but love, in one form or another — is to have failed to give that impulse to the course of events which every man born into the world should hold himself bound to give, as the human debt to the Eternal.

Felipa felt something of this, and it lessened the vague burden of self-reproach she had been carrying. She was almost cheerful when she got back to the post. Through the last breakfast, which the Elltons took for granted must be a sad one, and conscientiously did their best to make so, she had some difficulty in keeping down to their depression.

It was not until they all, from the commandant down to the recruits of Landor's troop, came to say good-by that she felt the straining and cutting of the strong tie of the service, which never quite breaks though it be stretched over rough and long years and almost forgot-

ten. The post blacksmith to whom she had been kind during an illness, the forlorn sickly little laundress whose baby she had eased in dying, the baker to whose motherless child she had been good — all came crowding up the steps. They were sincerely sorry to have her go. She had been generous and possessed of that charity which is more than faith or hope. It was the good-bys of Landor's men that were the hardest for her. He had been proud of his troop, and it had been devoted to him. She broke down utterly and cried when it came to them, and tears were as hard for her as for a man. But with the officers and their women, it rose up between her and them that they would so shortly despise and condemn her, that they would not touch her hands could they but know her thoughts.

Ellton was going with her to the railroad. They were to travel with a mounted escort, as she had come, on account of the uncertain state of the country. And they must cross, as she had done in coming also, the road over the malpais, where Landor had fallen. As the hoofs of the mules and the tires of the wheels began to slip and screech on the smooth-worn lava, and the ambulance rattled and creaked up the incline, Ellton leaned forward and pointed silently to a hollow in the gray rock a few yards away. It was where Landor had pitched forward over the body of the mounted chief of scouts. Felipa nodded gravely, but she did not speak, nor yet weep. Ellton, already thrown back upon himself by her persistent silence with regard to her in-

tentions, recoiled even more. He thought her hard beyond all his previous experience of women.

"I will write to you where you are to send my mail," she told him, when the train was about to pull out. He bowed stiffly, and raising his hat was gone. She looked after him as he went across the cinder bed to the ambulance which was to take him back, and wondered what would have been the look upon his nice, open face, if she had told him her plans, after all. But she was the only one who knew them.

And Cairness himself was startled and utterly unprepared when the Reverend Taylor opened the door of the room where he lay and let her pass in. The little parson uttered no word, but there was a look on his face which said that now the questions he had put with no result were answered. It was for this that Cairness had given the best of his life.

Cairness lay white and still, looking up at her. He was very weak and dazed, and for the instant he could only remember, absurdly enough, the Andromaque he had seen a French actress play once in his very early youth when he had been taken with all the children of the Lycée, where he was then at school, to the theatre on a Thursday afternoon. The Andromaque had been tall and dark and superb, and all in black, like that woman in the doorway there.

And then his thoughts shot back to the present with quick pain. She should not have come here, not so soon. He had taken a long, hard trip that had nearly ended in his death, to avoid this very thing, this meet-

ing, which, just because it made him so terribly happy, seemed a treachery, a sacrilege. Had she less delicacy of feeling than himself? Or had she more love? It was that, he saw it in her beautiful eyes which were growing wide and frightened at his silence. He took his hand from under the sheets and stretched it out to her. She went to him and dropped on her knees beside the bed, and threw her arms about him. He moved his weak head closer to her shoulder, and pressing her fingers to his face gave a choking sob. He was happy, so very happy. And nothing mattered but just this.

XXIV

"CAIRNESS!" called Crook, and Cairness, turning aside, came over to where the general sat upon a big stone eating a sandwich two inches thick.

"Well?" said the officer.

"Well," answered Cairness, "I have been talking to them, chiefly to Geronimo. They have a good place for their rancheria on that hilltop. It is an old lava bed, an extinct crater, and it is a perfect fortress. There are three gulches between us and them, and a thousand men couldn't take the place."

"I came here to parley, not to fight," said the general, rather sharply. "What is their disposition?"

"I dare say they are willing to surrender, upon terms to suit them. But they are very much afraid of treachery. They are on the lookout for deception at every turn. In fact, they are not in altogether the most amiable frame of mind, for the greater part. However, you can decide that for yourself when they come over, which will be directly."

He seated himself upon a low branch of sycamore, which grew parallel to the ground, and went on to tell what he had seen on the hilltop in the hostile camp. "They are in capital condition. A lot of them are playing koon-kan. There were some children and one little red-headed Irishman about ten years old with

them. He was captured in New Mexico, and seems quite happy. He enjoys the name of Santiago Mackin —plain James, originally, I suppose."

The general smiled. He treated Cairness as nearly like an equal as possible always, and got his advice and comment whenever he could.

"Then they all have 'medicine' on," Cairness continued, "redbird and woodpecker feathers, in buckskin bags, or quail heads, or prairie-dog claws. One fellow was making an ornament out of an adobe dollar. Every buck and boy in the band has a couple of cartridge belts and any quantity of ammunition, likewise new shirts and *zarapes*. They have fitted themselves out one way or another since Crawford got at them in January. I don't think there are any of them particularly anxious to come in."

Another officer came up, and Cairness dropped from the twisted bow and walked away.

"That fellow Cairness may be a good scout and all that, but he must be an unmitigated blackguard too," said the officer, stretching himself on the ground beside Crook.

The general turned his head sharply, and his eyes flashed, but he only asked dryly, "Why?"

"You know he's the man Landor lost his life saving upon the malpais in New Mexico?"

"Yes," said Crook.

"And inside of a fortnight he and Mrs. Landor went to some Roman Catholic priest in Tombstone and were married. I call that indecent haste."

"What!" ejaculated the general. He was moved altogether from his imperturbable calm.

"That's the straight bill. Ask him. He isn't fit to be spoken to."

"Is that the very handsome Mrs. Landor who was at Grant a year or so ago?" The general seemed to have difficulty in grasping and believing it.

"That same. She was part Mescalero, anyway."

"Where is she now?"

"On his ranch, living on the fat of a lean land, I believe. He's rich, you know. I don't know much about them. I've small use for them. And I used to like Cairness, too. Thought he was way above his job. Those squaw-men lose all sense of honor."

"Cairness never was a squaw-man," corrected Crook.

"Well, he is now, then," insisted the officer; "Mrs. Landor is a squaw at bottom. Poor old Jack!" he sat up and fired a stone at the stalk of a Spanish bayonet, "I guess he's better off in the Happy Hunting Grounds. His wasn't a bed of roses."

The general sat silent for a while. "I didn't know that when I sent for him this time," he said at length, in partial explanation. Then he turned his head and looked up over his shoulders at the hostiles' conical hill. A band of Chiricahuas was coming down the side toward the soldiers' camp.

It was the first scene of the closing act of the tragic comedy of the Geronimo campaign. That wily old devil, weary temporarily of the bloodshed he had continued with more or less regularity for many years, had

sent word to the officers that he would meet them without their commands, in the Cañon de los Embudos, across the border line, to discuss the terms of surrender. The officers had forthwith come, Crook yet hopeful that something might be accomplished by honesty and plain dealing; the others, for the most part, doubting.

The character of Geronimo, as already manifested, was not one to inspire much confidence, nor was his appearance one to command respect. The suppositious dignity of the savage was lacking entirely. The great chief wore a filthy shirt and a disreputable coat, a loin-cloth, and a dirty kerchief wound around his head. His legs were bare from the hips, save for a pair of low moccasins. His whole appearance was grotesque and evil.

The general refused the withered hand he put out, and looked at him unsmilingly. The feelings of the old chief were hurt. He sat down upon the ground, under the shadows of the cottonwoods and sycamores, and explained his conduct with tears in his bleary eyes. The officers and packers, citizens and interpreters, sat round upon the ground also, with the few Indians who had ventured into the White-man's camp in the background, on the rise of the slope. There was a photographer too, who had followed the command from Tombstone, and who stationed himself afar off and took snap-shots during the conference, which, like most conferences of its sort, was vague enough.

It was the usual tale of woe that Geronimo had to tell, much the same that the old buck had recited to

Cairness in the spring of the last year. His particular grievance was the request for his hanging, which he had been told had been put in the papers, and his fear of three White-men who he believed were to arrest him. "I don't want that any more. When a man tries to do right, such stories ought not to be put in the newspapers. What is the matter with you that you do not speak to me? It would be better if you would look with a pleasant face. I should be more satisfied if you would talk to me once in a while." The interpreter translated stolidly. "Why don't you look at me and smile at me? I am the same man. I have the same feet, legs, and hands, and the Sun looks down on me a complete man." There was no doubt about that, at any rate, and perhaps it was not an unmixed good fortune.

The general's long silence was making the complete man nervous. Beads of sweat stood out on his forehead, and he twisted his hands together. "The Sun, the Darkness, and the Winds are all listening to what we now say. To prove to you that I am telling the truth, remember that I sent you word that I would come from a place far away to speak to you here, and you see me now. If I were thinking bad, I would never have come here. If it had been my fault, would I have come so far to talk with you?" he whined.

The general was neither convinced nor won over. He had Geronimo told that it was a very pretty story, but that there was no reason why forty men should have left the reservation for fear of three. "And if you were afraid of three, what had that to do with the

way you sneaked all over the country, killing innocent people? You promised me in the Sierra Madre that that peace should last. But you lied. When a man has lied to me once, I want better proof than his word to believe him again."

The tears trickled down the withered cheeks, and Crook gave a shrug of exasperation and disgust. "Your story of being afraid of arrest is all bosh. There were no orders to arrest you. You began the trouble by trying to kill Chato." Geronimo shook his head, as one much wronged and misunderstood. "Yes you did, too. Everything that you did on the reservation is known. There is no use your lying."

Then he delivered his ultimatum, slowly, watching the unhappy savage narrowly from under the visor of his pith helmet. "You must make up your mind whether you will stay out on the war-path or surrender — without conditions. If you stay out, I'll keep after you and kill the last one, if it takes fifty years. I have never lied to you," he stood up and waved his hand; "I have said all I have to say. You had better think it over to-night and let me know in the morning."

He walked away, and Geronimo went back to his rancheria on the hilltop, crestfallen. He had failed of his effect, and had not by any means made his own terms.

The troops settled down to wait, and Cairness, having further sounded some of the Chiricahua squaws, went again in search of Crook. He was seated under an ash tree with his back against the trunk and a portfolio

upon his knee, writing. When Cairness stopped in front of him, he glanced up.

There was an expression in his eyes Cairness did not understand. It was not like their usual twinkle of welcome. "Wait a moment," he said, and went on with his writing. Cairness dropped down on the ground, and, for want of anything else to do, began to whittle a whistle out of a willow branch.

Crook closed up the portfolio and turned to him. "I didn't know you were married, Mr. Cairness, when I sent for you."

Cairness reddened to the roots of his hair, and the scar on his forehead grew purple. He understood that look now. And it hurt him more than any of the slights and rebuffs he had received since he had married Felipa. He had, like most of those who served under the general, a sort of hero-worship for him, and set great store by his opinion. It was only because of that that he had left Felipa alone upon the ranch. It had been their first separation and almost absurdly hard for two who had lived their roving lives.

It was more for her than for himself that the rebuke hurt him. For it was a rebuke, though as yet it was unsaid. And he thought for a moment that he would defend her to the general. He had never done so yet, not even to the little parson in Tombstone whose obvious disapproval he had never tried to combat, though it had ended the friendship of years.

But Crook did not look like a man who wished to receive confidences. He was asking for facts, and

seeking them out with a cold, sharp eye. "I have been married nearly a year," said Cairness, shortly.

"To Captain Landor's widow, I am told."

"To Captain Landor's widow, yes;" he met the unsympathetic eyes squarely. "I came to tell you, general, what I have gathered from the squaws. It may serve you."

Crook looked away, straight in front of him. "Go on," he said. It was not the conversation of equals now. It was the report of an inferior to a superior. However familiar the general might wish to be upon occasions, he held always in reserve the right to deference and obedience when he should desire them.

It was short and to the point upon Cairness's part, and having finished he stood up.

"Is that all?" asked the general.

"That is all."

"Thank you," he said; and Cairness walked away.

The next two days he kept to himself and talked only to his Apache scouts, in a defiant return to his admiration for the savage character. A Chiricahua asked no questions and made no conventional reproaches at any rate. He was not penitent, he was not even ashamed, and he would not play at being either. But he was hurt, this last time most of all, and it made him ugly. He had always felt as if he were of the army, although not in it, not by reason of his one enlistment, but by reason of the footing upon which the officers had always received him up to the present time. But now he was an outcast. He faced

the fact, and it was a very unpleasant one. It was almost as though he had been court-martialled and cashiered. He had thoughts of throwing up the whole thing and going back to Felipa, but he hated to seem to run away. It would be better to stop there and face it out, and accept the position that was allowed him, the same, after all, as that of the majority of chiefs of scouts.

And things were coming to an end, anyway. He could see it in the looks of the Apaches, and hear it in their whispers. They consented to come in, and even to put themselves at the discretion of the government, but there was a lack of the true ring in their promises. So when, on the third morning, before it was yet daylight, two chiefs came hurrying into camp and awoke the general with bad news, he was not greatly surprised. He had warned Crook of the possibility, for that matter.

It was the eternal old story of the White-man's whiskey. A rancher living some four hundred yards from the boundary line upon the Mexican side had sold it to the Indians. Many of them were dead or fighting drunk. The two sober Indians asked for a squad of soldiers to help them guard the ranchman, and stop him from selling any more mescal. They were right-minded themselves and really desired peace, and their despair was very great.

Geronimo and four other warriors were riding aimlessly about on two mules, drunk as they well could be, too drunk to do much that day. But when night

came, and with it a drizzling rain, the fears the ranchman and his mescal had put in their brains assumed real shapes, and they betook themselves to the mountains again, and to the war-path.

It was failure, flat failure. The officers knew it, and the general knew it. It was the indefinite prolongation of the troubles. It was the ignominious refutation of all his boasts — boasts based not so much upon trust in himself, as on belief in the nature of the Apache, whose stanch champion he had always been.

The fault of this last, crowning breach of faith was not all with the Red-men by any means. But the difficulty would be to have that believed. The world at large, — or such part of it as was deigning to take heed of this struggle against heavy odds, this contest between the prehistoric and the makers of history, — the world at large would not go into the details, if indeed it were ever to hear them. It would know just this, that a band of Indians, terrible in the very smallness of their numbers, were meeting the oncoming line of civilization from the East with that of the savagery of the West, as a prairie fire is met and checked in its advance by another fire kindled and set on to stop it. It would know that the blood of the masters of the land was being spilled upon the thirsty, unreclaimed ground by those who were, in right and justice, for the welfare of humanity, masters no more. It would know that the voice which should have been that of authority and command was often turned to helpless complaint or shrieks for mercy. And it

would not stop for the causes of these things; it could not be expected to. It would know that a man had come who had promised peace, confidently promised it in the event of certain other promises being fulfilled, and that he had failed of his purpose. The world would say that Crook had held in his grasp the Apaches and the future peace of an empire as large as that of Great Britain and Ireland, France and Germany in one, and that he had let it slip through nerveless fingers. It was signal failure.

Such Apaches as had not gone back on the war-path returned to the States with the troops; but there were five months more of the outrages of Geronimo and his kind. Then in the summer of the year another man, more fortunate and better fitted to deal with it all, perhaps, — with the tangle of lies and deceptions, cross purposes and trickery, — succeeded where Crook had failed and had been relieved of a task that was beyond him. Geronimo was captured, and was hurried off to a Florida prison with his band, as far as they well could be from the reservation they had refused to accept. And with them were sent other Indians, who had been the friends and helpers of the government for years, and who had run great risks to help or to obtain peace. But the memory and gratitude of governments is become a proverb. The southwest settled down to enjoy its safety. The troops rested upon the laurels they had won, the superseded general went on with his work in another field far away to the north. The new general, the saviour of the land, was heaped

with honor and praise, and the path of civilization was laid clear.

But before then Cairness returned to his ranch and set his back upon adventure for good and all. "Crook will be gone soon," he said to Felipa; "it is the beginning of his end. And even if he were to keep on, he might not need me any more."

"Why?" she asked, with a quick suspicion of the dreariness she caught in his tone.

He changed it to a laugh. "A scout married is a scout marred. I am a rancher now. It behooves me to accept myself as such. I have outlived my usefulness in the other field."

XXV

FELIPA sat up in bed, and leaning over to the window beside it drew up the shade and looked out. The cold, gray world of breaking day was battling furiously with a storm of rain. The huddling flowers in the garden bent to the ground before the rush of wind from the mountains across the prairie. The windmill sent out raucous cries as it flew madly around, the great dense clouds, black with rain, dawn-edged, charged through the sky, and the shining-leaved cottonwoods bent their branches almost to the earth. The figures of Cairness and a couple of cow-boys, wrapped in rubber coats, passed, fighting their way through the blur,— vague, dark shadows in the vague, dark mist.

The storm passed, with all the suddenness it had come on, and Felipa rose, and dressing herself quickly went out upon the porch. Three drenched kittens were mewing there piteously. She gathered them up in her hands and warmed them against her breast as she stood watching the earth and sky sob themselves to rest. All the petunias in the bed by the steps were full of rain, the crowfoot and madeira vines of the porch were stirring with the dripping water. Many great trees had had their branches snapped off and tossed several

yards away, and part of the windmill had been blown to the top of the stable, some distance off. She wondered if Cairness had been able to get the cut alfalfa covered. Then she took the kittens with her to the house and went into the kitchen, where the Chinese cook already had a fire in the stove. She ordered coffee and toast to be made at once, and leaving the kittens in the woodbox near the fire, went back to the sitting room.

It was a luxurious place. As much for his own artistic satisfaction as for her, Cairness had planned the interior of the house to be a background in keeping with Felipa, a fit setting for her, and she led the life of an Orient queen behind the walls of sun-baked clay. There was a wide couch almost in front of the roaring fire. She sank down in a heap of cushions, and taking up a book that lay open where her husband had put it down the night before, she tried to read by the flickering of the flame light over the pages.

She was drowsy, however, for it was still very early, and she was almost dropping off to sleep when the Chinaman brought the coffee and set it down upon a table near her, with a deference of manner not common to the Celestial when serving the Occidental woman, who, he believes, has lost the right to it directly she shows the inclination to do work herself. But Felipa was a mistress to his taste. As he bowed himself abjectly from her presence, Cairness came in. He had taken off his rubber coat and big hat, and was full of the vigor of life which makes the strong and healthy-

minded so good to look upon at the beginning of a day.

Felipa, from her place on the couch, smiled lazily, with a light which was not all from the fire in her half-closed eyes. She put out her hand, and he took it in both his own and held it against his cold cheek as he dropped down beside her. She laid her head on his shoulder, and for a while neither of them spoke.

Then there came a chuckling scream of baby laughter and a soft reproach, spoken in Spanish, from across the hall. She stood up and poured the coffee, but before she took her own she went out of the room and came back in a moment, carrying her small son high upon her shoulder.

Cairness watched how strong and erect and how sure of every muscle she was, and how well the blond little head looked against the dull blackness of the mother's hair. The child was in no way like Felipa, and it had never taken her place in its father's love. He was fond of it and proud, too ; but, had he been put to the test, he would have sacrificed its life for that of its mother, with a sort of fanatical joy.

She put the baby between them, and it sat looking into the fire in the way she herself so often did, until her husband had called her the High Priestess of the Flames. Then she sank down among the cushions again and stirred her coffee indolently, drowsily, steeped in the contentment of perfect well-being. Cairness followed her movements with sharp pleasure.

Later, when the sun was well up in the jewel-blue sky, and the world was all ashine, they began the real routine of the day. And it would have been much like that of any of the other days that had gone before it for two years, had not Cairness come in a little before the noon hour, bringing with him a guest. It was an Englishman, whom he presented to Felipa as a friend of his youth, and named Forbes.

He did not see that there was just the faintest shadow of pausing upon Forbes's part, just the quickest passing hesitation and narrowing of the eyes with Felipa. She came forward with unquestioning welcome, accustomed to take it as a matter of course that any traveller, minded to stop for a time, should go into the first ranch house at hand.

He told her, directly, that he was passing through Arizona to hunt and to look to certain mining interests he held there. And he stayed, talking with her and her husband about the country and the towns and posts he had visited, until long after luncheon. Then Cairness, having to ride to the salt lick at the other end of the ranch, up in the Huachuca foot-hills, suggested that Forbes go with him.

It was plain, even to Felipa, how thoroughly he enjoyed being with one who could talk of the past and of the present, from his own point of view. His Coventry had been almost complete since the day that the entire army, impersonated in Crook, had turned disapproving eyes upon him once, and had then looked away from him for good and all. It had been too bitter

a humiliation for him ever to subject himself to the chance of it again.

The better class of citizens did not roam over the country much, and no officers had stopped at his ranch in almost two years, though they had often passed by. And he knew well enough that they would have let their canteens go unfilled, and their horses without fodder, for a long time, rather than have accepted water from his wells or alfalfa from his land. He could understand their feeling, too, — that was the worst of it; but though his love and his loyalty toward Felipa never for one moment wavered, he was learning surely day by day that a woman, be she never so much beloved, cannot make up to a man for long for the companionship of his own kind; and, least of all, — he was forced to admit it in the depths of his consciousness now, — one whose interests were circumscribed.

They had lived an idyl for two years apast, and he begrudged nothing; yet now that the splendor was fading, as he knew that it was, the future was a little dreary before them both, before him the more, for he meant that, cost him what it might, Felipa should never know that the glamour was going for himself. It would be the easier that she was not subtle of perception, not quick to grasp the unexpressed. As for him, he had wondered from the first what price the gods would put upon the unflawed jewel of their happiness, and had said in himself that none could be too high.

Forbes and her husband having gone away, Felipa lay in the hammock upon the porch and looked up into the vines. She thought hard, and remembered many things as she swayed to and fro. She remembered that one return to Nature long ago of which Landor had not known.

There had been an afternoon in Washington when, on her road to some reception of a half-official kind, she had crossed the opening of an alleyway and had come upon three boys who were torturing a small, blind kitten; and almost without knowing what she did, because her maternal grandfather had done to the children of his enemies as the young civilized savages were doing to the kitten there, she stopped and watched them, not enjoying the sight perhaps, but not recoiling from it either. So intent had she been that she had not heard footsteps crossing the street toward her, and had not known that some one stopped beside her with an exclamation of wrath and dismay. She had turned suddenly and looked up, the pupils of her eyes contracted curiously as they had been when she had watched the tarantula-vinagrone fight years before.

The man beside her was an attaché of the British legation, who had been one of her greatest admirers to that time, but thereafter he sought her out no more. He had driven the boys off, and taking the kitten, which mewed piteously all the way, had gone with her to her destination and left her.

She had been sufficiently ashamed of herself thereafter, and totally unable to understand her own evil

impulse. As she lay swinging in the hammock, she remembered this and many other things connected with that abhorred period of compulsory civilization and of success. The hot, close, dead, sweet smell of the petunias, wilting in the August sun, and the surface-baked earth came up to her. It made her vaguely heartsick and depressed. The mood was unusual with her. She wished intensely that her husband would come back.

After a time she roused herself and went into the house, and directly she came back with the baby in her arms. The younger of the two children that she had taken under her care at Stanton, the little girl, followed after her.

It was a long way to the salt lick, and the chances were that the two men would be gone the whole afternoon. The day was very hot, and she had put on a long, white wrapper, letting her heavy hair fall down over her shoulders, as she did upon every excuse now, and always when her husband was out of the way. There was a sunbonnet hanging across the porch railing. She put it on her head and went down the steps, carrying the child.

Back of her, a score or more of miles away, were the iron-gray mountains; beyond those, others of blue; and still beyond, others of yet fainter blue, melting into the sky and the massed white clouds upon the horizon edge. But in front of her the flat stretched away and away, a waste of white-patched soil and glaring sand flecked with scrubs. The pungency of greasewood and sage

was thick in the air, which seemed to reverberate with heat. A crow was flying above in the blue ; its shadow darted over the ground, now here, now far off.

Half a mile beyond, within the same barbed-wire enclosure as the home buildings and corrals, was a spring-house surrounded by cottonwoods, just then the only patch of vivid green on the clay-colored waste. There were benches under the cottonwoods, and the ground was cool, and thither Felipa took her way, in no wise oppressed by the heat. Her step was as firm and as quick as it had been the day she had come so noiselessly along the parade, across the path of the private who was going to the barracks. It was as quiet, too, for she had on a pair of old red satin slippers, badly run down at the heel.

Cairness started for the salt lick, then changed his mind and his destination, and merely rode with Forbes around the parts of the ranch which were under more or less cultivation, and to one of the water troughs beneath a knot of live oaks in the direction of the foot-hills. So they returned to the home place earlier than they otherwise would have done, and that, too, by way of the spring-house.

They caught sight of Felipa, and both drew rein simultaneously. She was leaning against a post of the wire fence. The baby was carried on her hip, tucked under her arm, the sunbonnet was hanging by the strings around her neck, and her head, with its straight loose hair, was uncovered. The little girl stood beside her, clutching the white wrapper which had trailed in

the spring-house acequia, and from under which a muddy red slipper showed. That she was imposing still, said much for the quality of her beauty. She did not hear the tramp of the two horses, sharp as her ears were, for she was too intent upon watching a fight between two steers.

One had gone mad with loco-weed, and they gored each other's sides until the blood ran, while only a low, moaning bellow came from their dried throats. A cloud of fine dust, that threw back the sun in glitters, hung over them, and a flock of crows, circling above in the steel-blue sky, waited.

"Felipa!" shouted Cairness. He was angry — almost as angry as Forbes had been when he had come upon Mrs. Landor watching the boys and the kitten in the alleyway.

She heard, and again her eyes met Forbes's. There was a flash of comprehension in them. She knew what he was thinking very well. But she left the fence, and, pushing the sunbonnet over her head, joined them, not in the least put out, and they dismounted and walked beside her, back to the house.

Cairness was taciturn. It was some moments before he could control his annoyance, by the main strength of his sense of justice, by telling himself once again that he had no right to blame Felipa for the manifestations of that nature he had known her to possess from the first. It was not she who was changing.

Forbes explained their early return, and spoke of the ranch. "It might be a garden, this territory, if

only it had water enough," he said; "it has a future, possibly, but its present is just a little dismal, I think. Are you greatly attached to the life here, Mrs. Cairness?" He was studying her, and she knew it, though his glance swept the outlook comprehensively, and she was watching the mail-carrier riding toward them along the road. It was the brother of the little girl who followed along behind them, and who ran off now to meet him, calling and waving her hand.

"Yes," she said, "I am very much attached to it. I was born to it."

"Do you care for it so much that you would not be happy in any other?"

"That would depend," she answered with her enigmatical, slow smile; "I could be happy almost anywhere with Mr. Cairness."

"Of course," he laughed tolerantly, "I dare say any wilderness were paradise with him."

Felipa smiled again. "I might be happy," she went on, "but I probably should not live very long. I have Indian blood in my veins; and we die easily in a too much civilization."

That evening they sat talking together long after the late dinner. But a little before midnight Felipa left them upon the porch, smoking and still going over the past. They had so much to say of matters that she in no way understood. The world they spoke of and its language were quite foreign to her. She knew that her husband was where she could never follow him, and she felt the first utter dreariness of jealousy —

the jealousy of the intellectual, so much more unendurable than that of the material.

With the things of the flesh there can be the vindictive hope, the certainty indeed, that they will lose their charm with time, that the gold will tarnish and the gray come above the green, but a thought is dearer for every year that it is held, and its beauty does not fade away. The things of the flesh we may even mar ourselves, if the rage overpowers us, but those of the intellect are not to be reached or destroyed; and Felipa felt it as she turned from them and went into the house.

There was a big moon, already on the wane, floating very high in the heavens, and the plain was a silvery sheen.

"This is all very beautiful," said Forbes, after a silence.

Cairness did not see that it called for a reply, and he made none.

"But it is doing Mrs. Cairness an injustice, if you don't mind my saying so."

"What do you mean?" asked Cairness, rather more than a trifle coldly. He had all but forgotten the matter of that afternoon. Felipa had redeemed herself through the evening, so that he had reason to be proud of her.

"I used to know Mrs. Cairness in Washington," Forbes went on, undisturbed; "she has probably told you so."

Cairness was surprised almost into showing his surprise. Felipa had said nothing of it to him. And he

knew well enough that she never forgot a face. He felt that he was in a false position, but he answered "Yes?" non-committally.

"Yes," answered Forbes, "she was very much admired." He looked a little unhappy. But his mind was evidently made up, and he went on doggedly: "Look here, Morely, old chap, I am going to tell you what I think, and you may do as you jolly well please about it afterward — kick me off the ranch, if you like. But I can see these things with a clearer eye than yours, because I am not in love, and you are, dreadfully so, you know, not to say infatuated. I came near to being once upon a time, and with your wife, too. I thought her the most beautiful woman I had ever known, and I do yet. I thought, too, that she was a good deal unhappier with Landor than she herself realized; in which I was perfectly right. It's plainer than ever, by contrast. Of course I understand that she is part Indian, though I've only known it recently. And it's because I've seen a good deal of your Apaches of late that I appreciate the injustice you are doing her and Cairness Junior, keeping them here. She is far and away too good for all this," he swept the scene comprehensively with his pipe. "She'd be a sensation, even in London. Do you see what I mean, or are you too vexed to see anything?"

Cairness did not answer at once. He pushed the tobacco down in his brier and sat looking into the bowl. "No," he said at last, "I'm not too vexed. The fact is, I have seen what you mean for a long time. But what

would you suggest by way of remedy, if I may ask?" They were both talking too low for their voices to reach Felipa through the open window of her bedroom.

"That you take them to civilization — the missus and the kid. It's the only salvation for all three of you — for you as well as them."

"You heard what Mrs. Cairness said this afternoon. She was very ill in school when she was a young girl, and still more so in Washington afterward." He shook his head. "No, Forbes, you may think you know something about the Apache, but you don't know him as I do, who have been with him for years. I've seen too much of the melting away of half and quarter breeds. They die without the shadow of an excuse, in civilization."

But Forbes persisted, carried away by his idea and the determination to make events fit in with it. "She was ill in Washington because she wasn't happy. She'd be happy anywhere with you; she said so this afternoon, you remember."

"She also said that it would kill her."

Forbes went on without noticing the interruption. "You are a great influence in her life, but you aren't the only one. Her surroundings act powerfully upon her. When I knew her before, she was like any other beautiful woman — "

"I am far from being sure that that is entirely to be desired, very far," said Cairness, with conviction. He had never ceased to feel a certain annoyance at

the memory of that year and a half of Felipa's life in which he had had no part.

Forbes shrugged his shoulders. "You'll pardon me if I say that here she is a luxurious semi-barbarian." It was on his tongue's tip to add, "and this afternoon, by the spring-house, she was nearly an Apache," but he checked it. "It's very picturesque and poetical and all that, — from the romantic point of view it's perfect, — but it isn't feasible. You can't live on honeycomb for more than a month or twain. I can't imagine a greater misfortune than for you two to grow contented here, and that's what you'll do. It will be a criminal waste of good material."

Cairness knew that it was true, too true to refute.

"I am speaking about Mrs. Cairness," Forbes went on earnestly, "because she is more of an argument for you than the child is, which is un-English too, isn't it? But the child is a fine boy, nevertheless, and there will be other children probably. I don't need to paint their future to you, if you let them grow up here. You owe it to them and to your wife and to yourself — to society for that matter — not to retrograde. Oh! I say, I'm out and out lecturing on sociology. You're good-tempered to put up with it, but I mean well — like most meddlers."

"I have the ranch; how could I get away?" Cairness opposed.

But the argument was weak. Forbes paid small heed to it. "You've a great deal besides. Every one in the country knows your mines have made you a

rich man. And you are better than that. You are a talented man, though you've frittered away your abilities too long to amount to anything much, now. You ought to get as far off from this kind of thing as you can."

He did not even hint that he knew of the isolation of their lives, but Cairness was fully aware that he must, and that it was what he meant now. "You ought to go to another country. Not back to Australia, either; it is too much this sort, but somewhere where the very air is civilizing, where it's in the atmosphere and you can't get away from it. I'll tell you what you do." He stood up and knocked the ashes from his pipe against the porch rail. "You've plenty of friends at home. Sell the ranch, or keep it to come back to once in a way if you like. I'm going back in the autumn, in October. You come with me, you and Mrs. Cairness and the boy."

Cairness clasped his hands about one knee and bent back, looking up at the stars, — and far beyond them into the infinity of that Cause of which they and he and all the perplexing problems were but the mere effects. "You mustn't think I haven't thought it over, time and again," he said, after a while. "It's more vital to me than to you; but my way isn't clear. I loved Mrs. Cairness for more than ten years before I could marry her. I should lose her in less than that, I am absolutely certain, if I did as you suggest. She is not so strong a woman as you might suppose. This dry air, this climate, are necessary to her." He hesitated a

little, rather loath to speak of his sentiments, and yet glad of the chance to put his arguments in words, for his own greater satisfaction. "You call it picturesque and poetical and all that," he said, "but you only half mean it after all. It is picturesque. It has been absolutely satisfactory. I'm not given to talking about this kind of thing, you know; but most men who have been married two years couldn't say truthfully that they have nothing to regret; that if they had had to buy that time with eternity of damnation and the lake of fire, it would not have come too dear. And I have had no price to pay —" he stopped short, the ring of conviction cut off, as the sound of a bell is when a hand is laid upon it. The hand was that of a fact, of the fact that had confronted him in the Cañon de los Embudos, and that very day by the cottonwoods of the spring-house.

"Mrs. Cairness would go where I wished gladly," he added, more evenly; "but if it were to a life very different from this, it would end in death — and I should be the cause of it. There it is." He too rose, impatiently.

"Think it over, in any case," urged Forbes; "I am going in, good night."

"I have thought it over," said Cairness; "good night."

Cairness sat for a long time, smoking and thinking. Then Felipa's voice called to him and he went in to her. She was by the window in a flood of moonlight, herself all in flowing white, with the mantle of black hair upon her shoulders.

He put his arm about her and she laid her head against his breast. "I am jealous of him," she said, without any manner of preface.

He made no pretence of not understanding. "You have no need to be, dear," he said simply.

"He gives you what I can't give," she said.

"You give me what no one else could give — the best things in life."

"Better than the — other things?" she asked, and he answered, unhesitating, "Yes."

There was another silence, and this time he broke it.

"Why did you not tell me you had known Forbes, Felipa?" If it had not been that she was commonly and often unaccountably reticent, there might have been some suspicion in the question. But there was only a slight annoyance. Nor was there hesitation in her reply.

"It brought back too much that was unpleasant for me. I did not want to talk about it. He saw that I did not, too, and I can't understand why he should have spoken of it. I should have told you after he had gone." She was not disconcerted in the slightest, only a little vindictive toward Forbes, and he thought it would hardly be worth his while to point out the curious position her silence put him in.

He gathered his courage for what he was going to say next, with a feeling almost of guilt. "Forbes says that I am doing you an injustice, keeping you here; that it is no life for you."

"It is the only one I can live," she said indifferently

enough, stating it as an accepted, incontrovertible fact, "and it's the one you like best."

He had told her that many times. It had been true; perhaps it was true still.

"He does not understand," she continued; "he was always a society man, forever at receptions and dances and teas. He doesn't see how we can make up to each other for all the world."

She moved away from him and out of the ray of moonlight, into the shadow of the other side of the window, and spoke thoughtfully, with more depth to her voice than usual. "So few people have been as happy as we have. If we went hunting for more happiness somewhere else, we should be throwing away the gifts of the gods, I think."

Cairness looked over at her in some surprise, but her face was in the shadow. He wondered that she had picked up the phrase. It was a common one with him, a sort of catchword he had the habit of using. But she was not given to philosophy. It was oddly in line with his own previous train of thought.

He laughed, a little falsely, and turned back into the room.

"The gods sell their gifts," he said.

XXVI

Forbes left the ranch after breakfast the next day, and Cairness went with him to Tombstone. He had business there, connected with one of his mines.

Felipa spent the day, for the most part, in riding about the ranch and in anticipating the night. Her husband had promised to be back soon after moonrise. When it had begun to turn dark, she dressed herself all in white and went out to swing in the hammock until it should be time for her lonely dinner.

Before long she heard a horse coming at a gallop up the road, to the front of the house. She put out her hand and pushed aside the vines, but could see little until the rider, dismounting and dropping his reins to hang on the ground, ran up the steps. It was the mail carrier, the young hero of the Indian massacre. Felipa saw in a moment that he was excited. She thought of her husband at once, and sat up in the hammock.

"Well?" she said peremptorily.

"It's —" the boy looked around nervously. "If you'd come into the house —" he ventured.

She went into the bedroom, half dragging him by the shoulder, and shut the door. "Now!" she said, "make haste."

"It's Mr. Cairness, ma'am," he whispered.

"Is he hurt?" she shook him sharply.

The boy explained that it was not that, and she let him go, in relief.

"But he is goin' to be. That's what I come so quick to tell you." He stopped again.

"Will you make haste?" cried Felipa, out of patience.

"He's coming back from Tombstone with some money, ain't he?"

Felipa nodded. "A very little," she said.

"Well, they think it's a lot."

"Who?"

"The fellers that's after him. They're goin' to hold him up fifteen miles out, down there by where the Huachuca road crosses. He's alone, ain't he?"

"Yes," said Felipa.

"How do you know this?"

"Old Manuel he told me. You don't know him. It's an old Greaser, friend of mine. He don't want no one to tell he told, they'd get after him. But it's so, all right. There's three of them."

A stable man passed the window. Felipa called to him. "Bring me my horse, quick, and mount four men! Don't take five minutes and be well armed," she ordered in a low voice. Hers was the twofold decision of character and of training that may not be disregarded. The man started on a run.

"What you goin' to do?" the boy asked. He was round-eyed with dismay and astonishment.

Felipa did not answer. She broke her revolver and looked into the chambers. Two of them were empty,

and she took some cartridges from a desk drawer and slipped them in. The holster was attached to her saddle, and she rarely rode without it.

"You ain't goin' to try to stop him?" the boy said stupidly. "He was goin' to leave Tombstone at sundown. He'll be to the place before you ken ketch him, sure."

"We'll see," she answered shortly; "it is where the Huachuca road crosses, you are certain?"

He nodded forcibly. "Where all them mesquites is to one side, and the arroyo to the other. They'll be behind the mesquite. But you ain't goin' to head him off," he added, "there ain't even a short cut. The road's the shortest."

The stableman came on a run, leading her horse, and she fairly leaped down the steps, and slipping the pistol into the holster mounted with a spring. "All of you follow me," she said; "they are going to hold up Mr. Cairness."

On the instant she put her horse to a run and tore off through the gate toward the open country. It was dark, but by the stars she could see the road and its low bushes and big stones that danced by as her horse, with its belly to the ground, sped on. She strained her ears and caught the sound of hoofs. The men were following her, the gleam of her white dress guiding them. She knew they could not catch her. The horse she rode was a thoroughbred, the fastest on the ranch; not even Cairness's own could match it. It stretched out its long black neck and went evenly ahead, almost without

motion, rising over a dog hole now and then, coming down again, and going on, unslacking. She felt the bit steadily and pressed her knee against the hunting horn for purchase, her toe barely touching the stirrup, that she might be the freer in a fall.

If it went like this, she thought, she might get to the cross-road first, and beyond. The four men would not matter much then, if she could but stop her husband. Why had he started back alone — and carrying money too? It was foolhardy. But then there was so little money, she knew, that he had probably not thought of it as booty. She turned her uncovered head and listened. Her hair had fallen loose and was streaming out in the wind. She could not hear the others now. They must be well behind.

There was a faint, white light above the distant mountains in the east. The moon was about to rise. In a few moments more it came drifting up, and the plain was all alight. Far away on the edge was a vague, half-luminous haze, and nearer the shadows of the bushes fell sharp and black. A mile ahead, perhaps, along the road, she could make out the dark blot of the mesquite clump. Behind, as she looked again, she could just see four figures following.

It occurred to her now for the first time that there was danger for herself, so far in front, so entirely alone. The chances for passing the mesquites were not very good. If the men were already there, and that might be counted upon, they would not let her pass if they could help it. It occasioned her but one fear — that she

could not stop her husband. If she were to turn from the road out into the open, she would lose time, even if the horse did not fall, and time was not to be lost.

The mesquites were very near. She bent down over the horse's neck and spoke to him. His stride lengthened out yet more. She drew the little revolver, and cocked it, still bending low. If they were to fire at her, the white gown would make a good mark; but she would show as little of it as might be, and she would not waste time answering shots, if it could be helped.

The mesquites were directly ahead. A horseman came out from behind them and placed himself across the road. There was a sheen of moonlight on a revolver barrel and a shouted "Halt there!"

He was in front of her, not a hundred feet away; to the left were the mesquites, to the right the ragged arroyo. There could be no turning aside. She threw up her own revolver, and fired, not at the man, but at the head of his horse. It reared and fell, and a moment after her own rose in the air, touched the ground beyond, and went on. It had leapt the fallen one and his rider, and was leaving them behind.

The man on the ground twisted his body around on his crushed leg, pinned under the pony, aimed deliberately at the white figure, and fired. Felipa's firm hold upon her revolver turned to a clutch, and her mouth fell open in a sharp gasp. But very deliberately she put the revolver into its holster, and then she laid her hand against her side. At once the palm was warm with blood.

She drew her horse down to a gallop, and the jar of the changed gait made her moan. There was no haste now. Her own men had come upon the desperadoes and there was a quick volley. And ahead, riding fast toward her from the top of a little rise, was a man on a white horse — her husband, she knew.

She gave a dry little sob of unutterable glad relief and tried to raise her voice and call to him, the call they used for one another when they rode about the ranch. But the sound was only a weak, low wail.

The horse came down to a walk. She had lost all control of the reins now, and clung to the pommel with both hands, swaying from side to side. She could hear galloping hoofs, behind and in front — or was it only the blood, the icy cold blood, pounding in her ears?

The horse stopped, and she reeled blindly in her seat into a pair of strong arms that caught her and drew her down. A voice was saying words she could not hear, but she knew the voice so well. And she smiled and dropped her head down upon her husband's shoulder. "Just — just in time," she whispered very low.

"In time, Felipa? In time for what, dear?" but there was no answer.

He turned her face up to the moonlight, and the head fell heavily back with the weight of hair. The half-closed eyes looked unseeing up to him, and the quiet lips smiled still.

"Felipa!" he cried, "Felipa!"

But only a coyote barked from a knoll near by.